



Fall 2022

Growing oysters for a cleaner Bay

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

Upcoming: Fall '22 Float Sale: October 15, 2022

~ Brian Ingram, Carl Zulick, Vic Spain, and
Richard Siciliano, MOGs

The venue and time of day for our TOGA Fall Float Sale has been changed to Good Luck Cellars, 1025 Good Luck Road, Kilmarnock, VA 22482; Time 11:00 AM to 2:00PM. This change was made unexpectedly after the printed newsletter went out.

During the event, TOGA will provide educational materials and personal consultation with Master Oyster Gardeners (MOGs) who will work with both prospective oyster gardeners and those who may have advanced questions about their own oyster gardens. In addition, TOGA will be introducing a new instructional opportunity under development, an interactive online course entitled *OYS-101-Orientation to Oyster Gardening*, and offered to registered TOGA members free of charge starting January 2023.

The sale includes *Taylor, Flip, Tidal Tumbler, Down Under*, and *Bottom Cages*/floats and bags. Hats, shirts, aprons, and other TOGA logo materials will be on sale as well. To ensure your float order is ready, order by October 1, 2022. Floats and devices are described here:

<https://www.oystergardener.org/devices-and-designs/>

For the *Price List*, go to the last page of this newsletter. TOGA can accept checks or cash; sorry, no credit cards.

As a bonus, local vendors will be selling Triploid and Diploid spat. Some spat vendors accept cash only.

New: The Rough Rider Cage: For oyster gardeners who live directly on the large rivers or Chesapeake Bay, this cage is similar in design to the Tidal Tumbler, but with key differences. Wave energy on the large water



bodies can damage some oyster floats and cages. The *Bottom Cage* works well for this environment and uses a regular spat bag. The *Rough Rider* is for those who want a smaller lighter device that can take the cylindrical spat tube. While it hangs from a dock like the *Tidal Tumbler*, it has no plastic surfaces (like PVC pipe or paint lids) that can cause a cage to bang against pilings because of their hydrodynamic surfaces. Furthermore, a wire-only cage rarely gets barnacle fouling. The *Rough Rider* is priced lower than a *Tidal Tumbler* because it does not have a flotation pipe. The new Tidal Tumbler uses all wire cage like the *Rough Rider*, only with the flotation pipe.

To order, please go to the TOGA online order form and click on the link provided:
<https://www.oystergardener.org/fall-float-sale>

The price list also may be found on the last page of this newsletter, and please note that the prices are for currently registered TOGA members. Non-members pay a \$15 surcharge per device in lieu of joining TOGA. However, if you join TOGA by October 1st, the members-only price is yours:

<https://www.oystergardener.org/become-a-member>

The online order form creates a record in our files and returns a copy of your order to you by email. Pay when you pick up your float. If you cannot be at the sales event, ask us to hold your float for you. Otherwise, the float you ordered may be sold. So, please pick up your pre-ordered floats by 11am. After that time, unclaimed and unreserved floats will go on sale to walkups.

Orders must be received by October 1, 2022 for TOGA to have sufficient materials available for production.

Items also available at the event (no need to order)

Mesh Bags (small or medium mesh)	\$10
Crab pot Line	\$0.10/foot
Float Wire Mesh, 4 feet wide	\$5/foot
TOGA hats	\$20
TOGA T-shirts	\$5, \$10

If you prefer to order by U.S. Mail, use the *Order Form* located at the end of this newsletter (you can download a manual order form for “pre-built” or “build your own” floats from the TOGA website). Submit a completed form by mail to the address on the form, or email a copy to: vicspain@rocketmail.com or bandbingram@gmail.com.

This event is a great opportunity to get oyster floats, bags, and different sizes of oyster floats; accessories and supplies will be available along with outside vendors to sell “spat” (young oysters). Vic Spain will demonstrate how to build your own Tidal Tumbler oyster float and will conduct a short class on “How to Get Started Growing Oysters,” as well as inform

beginning and experienced oyster gardeners about the latest techniques, regulations, and history of oyster growing and harvesting. This event is one of TOGA’s primary fundraising activities with all proceeds benefiting TOGA 501 (C) 3 charity.

Float Work Days: For TOGA members who want to help build their own floats before the sale, and in return get a \$10 discount on items they build, are encouraged to participate in one of our two remaining Fall ’22 float workdays: Wednesday, September 14th (10am-1pm) and Saturday, October 8th (10am-1pm), at Camp Kekoka, 1083 Boys Camp Rd, Kilmarnock VA 22482. Contact Vic Spain for details: <mailto:mvicspain@rocketmail.com>

Recap: Deltaville Float Sale: May 28th

~ Brian Ingram and Carl Zulick, MOGs



The Spring '22 oyster float sale on May 28, 2022, held at the Deltaville Maritime Museum's Holly Point Market off Jackson Creek in

Middlesex County, was a huge success due to pleasant weather, throngs of people visiting the TOGA tent, and the 118 pre-assembled cages sold, which well exceeded our 2021 total of 89 units. Taylor floats continue to be a favorite with 34 units, followed by 8 Flip Floats, 5 Bottom Cages, 21 Tidal Tumblers, 17 Rough Riders (new for 2022), and 33 Spat Tubes. Two of our local oyster seed vendors were there and quickly sold out. Many of our TOGA Master Oyster Gardeners (MOGs) were there to answer questions on how to get started growing oysters, sharing their knowledge about the latest techniques and regulations. In addition to the information tent, we provided information at our permanent outdoor exhibit on the pier.



TOGA's reception tent at the Deltaville Marine Museum Float Sale in May

For the second year, [Seaglass Wines](#) representative Sam Bohnstedt provided a free wine tasting of delicious adult grape beverages which brought many new people to our tent. Seaglass's Pinot Grigio, Rose, and Chardonnay were the most popular, keeping a steady line of tasters throughout the day. Seaglass has been a huge annual donor to TOGA, and this year they secured generous contributions from their partners, Food Lion, Giant and Kroger. We are so appreciative of these companies and ask you to support them too.



This event, along with TOGA's October 15th sales event, continues to be our primary fundraising activities, all proceeds benefitting TOGA's 501 © 3 charity. With last year's proceeds, TOGA funded an annual donation to the Virginia Institute of Marine Science graduate program fellowships and a pier replacement at APYC/YMCA Youth Camp Kekoka. Thanks to all who volunteered to work at the event; you made it a success, and remember, when you volunteer for TOGA, you are invited to the annual complimentary

Volunteer Party scheduled for November 19th at Camp Kekoka, 1083 Boys Camp Rd, Kilmarnock, VA 22482, 1PM – 4PM. Event coordinator: Terry Lewis, mlewistmn@msm.com

Recap: York River State Park Oyster Day: April 2nd

~Vic Spain, MOG



In early spring 2022, John Gresham, York River State Park Education Support Specialist, asked TOGA to help start an oyster garden at the park. As a result, *Oyster Day* was announced as April 2, 2022. TOGA provided an educational display and two Tidal Tumblers, each with a spat tube for growing juvenile oysters to maturity. TOGA Master Oyster Gardeners (MOGs) Lou Castagnola, Carl Zulick, Sue Borra, Eric Hentges, and Vic Spain represented TOGA on *Oyster Day*.



John Gresham and Vic Spain put in the first Tidal Tumbler, spat tube, and low-salinity fertile spat on Taskinas Creek, adjacent to the upper York River.

Dear Friends,

The estuarine ecosystems of the Chesapeake Bay and tributary rivers are vital to Virginia's ecology and economy. National Estuaries Week gives participating organizations an opportunity to introduce the public to these places where fresh water meets the sea. York River State Park is in a unique location not far from the confluence of the Mattaponi and Pamunkey Rivers and less than 30 miles away from where the York enters the bay at the York Spit Light.

Come and join our staff and volunteers on Saturday, September 17th from 10 am to 2 pm for a day of discovery and recreation. We would like for your organization to provide an informational and interactive display of its work for the health of and recreation in estuarine lands, marshes, and waters. We can provide picnic tables and we have a limited number of folding tables and chairs. Please let us know if your organization would like to participate by Friday, August 12th. Thanks, we look forward to hearing from you.

*John R. Gresham, Jr. CIG
Education Support Specialist I
York River State Park*

Upcoming: TOGA Outreach at the Heathsville Farmers Market "Living History" – September 17, 2022

~Richard Siciliano, MOG

Saturday, September 17th is one of the best days to "Make It a Heathsville Saturday" for the Heathsville Farmers Market "Living History Celebration," and because TOGA will have its education outreach tent there for marketgoers to learn about oyster gardening and growing oysters for a cleaner Bay.

To volunteer for this event, contact Richard Siciliano: rjsiciliano@yahoo.com. The Market takes place at Historic Rice's Hotel / Hughlett's Tavern, 73 Monument Place, Heathsville, VA 22473, 9AM to 1 PM. Learn more about the

market on Rice's Hotel/ Hughlett's Tavern website <https://www.rhhtfoundationinc.org/>

Recap: 2022 Middle Peninsula Spring Oyster Fair, April 23rd

~Vic Spain, MOG

The Spring '22 Oyster Fair was held April 23 at the Gwynn's Island Civic Center, Hudgins, Virginia. Because of the continued concern with Covid19, it was largely an outdoor affair focused on vendor sales of oyster gardening equipment and spat to oyster-gardening enthusiasts. Sales were brisk as oyster gardeners started refreshing their gardens as the waters warmed.

TOGA MOGs answered questions about oyster gardening and demonstrated how to build newer cage designs, such as spat tubes and Rough Riders.



(Above) At work building a "Rough Rider" oyster float, designed for "high energy" waters where tidal wave action helps young oysters (spat) develop. Within 18 months, oysters can grow from spat to adult size (2½ to 3 inches), "market size."

TOGA Survey Results: Members Value Oyster Gardening Resources and Adult Education as TOGA Priorities.

~Sue Borra, MOG

In April 2022, a total of 130 TOGA members provided their opinions about our guiding principles and activities. The results of this online survey will be used to guide future TOGA programs. TOGA members confirmed

the organization's three guiding principles with all being identified as very important.

1. TOGA promotes oyster gardening aquaculture in the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries.
2. TOGA educates interested citizens in oyster aquaculture methods.
3. TOGA promotes the environmental health of the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries through oyster cultivation.

Comments from members about these principles included the following:

- *Helping the Bay and enjoying your own oysters are important.*
- *Education is key to spreading the word and getting more folks to grow oysters for sustainability of the Bay and to grow their own food source.*
- *Everyone needs to understand the role of the oyster ecosystem.*

In ranking the TOGA activities, members valued providing oyster gardening resources, adult education, and oyster gardening assistance by Master Oyster Gardeners as their top three choices. Youth education was considered important and special projects were considered to be somewhat important.

Comments from members about these activities included the following:

- *We need to make it easy for gardeners to start or continue gardening.*
- *This (adult education) combines education and the information needed necessary for being an effective oyster gardener.*
- *Teaching and gardening assistance grows the members and the number of people joining the ranks of oyster gardeners.*
- *We need to create an awareness to the younger generation to sustain our efforts for the future.*
- *TOGA should give back to the community.*

When asked about the main reason they are members of TOGA, the feedback was extremely helpful. Here are a few of the many reasons offered:

- *Interest in aquaculture and the health of the Bay.*
- *To get up to date information on oyster gardening, oyster events such as opportunities to purchase oyster spats, oyster float material and talk with oyster gardeners.*
- *I believe in supporting this natural resource as it pertains to the health of our ecosystem, plus I enjoy raising and eating oysters.*

Overall, TOGA members indicated that the Guiding Principles and activities of TOGA are providing valuable direction and resources. The TOGA Board of Directors thanks all the members for your support of the organization and will prioritize programs and activities based on your input.

The Executive Summary of the 2022 TOGA *MEMBER Priorities Survey* is available for download from the TOGA website at: https://www.oystergardener.org/_files/ugd/9d48db_d6509cfedb3644d98ca002f1cece517b.pdf

Congratulations to the Master Oyster Gardeners (MOGs) Class of 2022

~ Karen Hudson, VIMS Shellfish Aquaculture Specialist, and Liaison to the Tidewater Oyster Gardeners Association

This summer, we “graduated” 20 Master Oyster Gardeners (MOGs) which included 16 brand new candidates, two MOGs from the 2017 class and two from 2020. Name tags and certificates are being distributed. One item of note is we had the first MOG from the eastern shore. The next MOG full class is planned for the summer of 2024.



*MOG class members of 2020 and 2022 share critters from their oyster gardens, June 11, 2022. Thanks to Karen Hudson and Celia Cackowski for a great learning experience. Who said you can't teach old dogs new tricks?
~Photo by Kent Eanes, MOG*

Recap: Westmoreland State Park Celebrated First-Year Anniversary of its Oyster Garden Project in Collaboration with TOGA

~Sue Borra, MOG

The Westmoreland State Park Oyster Garden is an educational experience where visitors can see a growing oyster garden in action along with an educational display at the boat dock and discover the value of oysters to the ecological well-being of the Potomac River and Chesapeake Bay at the Discovery Center. This educational project was initiated May 2021 and is a cooperative effort between the Friends of Westmoreland State Park and the Tidewater Oyster Gardeners Association (TOGA) with financial support from the Chesapeake Bay Restoration Fund.

On June 25, 2022, the park held its first Oyster Day, which featured the opening of the new oyster education exhibit provided by TOGA, and celebrated the first anniversary of the demonstration oyster garden at the Westmoreland State Park Boat Dock.

The Oyster Garden Project was recognized with a *2022 Virginia Green Travel Star Award*

from the Virginia Green Travel Alliance. Ranger Steve Davis presented the award to the Friends of Westmoreland State Park and TOGA for their contributions to the project.

Oyster Day included a TOGA exhibit and presentations on the history of oysters in the Chesapeake Bay and on the importance of oysters to the Bay and the Potomac River. Oyster Day participants also inspected the oysters growing in the oyster garden and started a new garden with baby oysters. Many thanks to Master Oyster Gardeners, Doug Schaefer, Vic Chapman, and Sue Borra for their help at the event!

Monthly oyster garden inspection and interpretation programs are held at Westmoreland State Park Boat Dock. For more information contact Sue Borra (MOG) at:

sue.borra@gmail.com



Sue Borra (MOG) inspects an adult oyster on Oyster Day at Westmoreland State Park



Doug Schaefer (MOG) talks with a future oyster gardener



(L-R): Sue Borra, Ranger Steve Davis, and Doug Schaefer at the Westmoreland State Park boat dock.

TOGA Spends the Day with Lancaster County 6th Graders

~Sue Borra, MOG

It was a warm, sunny, and very breezy spring day on April 14th at Belle Isle State Park, and TOGA conducted interactive Oyster Education Sessions for 85 Sixth graders from Lancaster Middle School. TOGA Master Oyster Gardeners, Doug Schaefer. Richard Siciliano and Sue Borra set up two learning stations, one on Oysters and the Chesapeake Bay and the other on Oyster Biology.

This was part of a larger program called “Think Outside the Sink” coordinated by the Northern Neck Soil & Water Conservation District with the goal to provide meaningful watershed education experiences to Northern Neck sixth graders. The students also experienced sessions from the Belle Isle Park Rangers, the Department of Forestry, Virginia Cooperative Extension, and 4-H.

At the TOGA Stations, the energetic students learned about the importance of oysters and oyster reef habitats to the Chesapeake Bay, along with the anatomy and lifecycle of the oyster and their role as filter feeders.

Interactive sessions included inspecting oysters, discovering the animals that live with the oysters, checking the salinity of the water and playing *Oyster Jeopardy*.



Richard Siciliano explains the lifecycle of the Virginia Oyster to a class of Middle Schoolers

The Lancaster County Middle School teachers were also encouraged to have their students enter TOGA’s Middle School Writing Contest on the topic “Consider the Oyster.”



Doug Schaefer (MOG) explains oyster anatomy to 6th graders from Lancaster Middle School by dissecting one of the adult Virginia oysters.

For additional information about the event, contact Sue Borra (sue.borra@gmail.com), Doug Schaefer (subiceguy@hotmail.com) or Richard Siciliano (rjsiciliano@yahoo.com)

Recap: Save the World Day at Kilmarnock Boys and Girls Club

~Brian Wood, MOG

On July 17, 2022, TOGA participated in the Boys and Girls Club "Save the World" event. According to Master Oyster Gardener (MOG) Brian Wood, "We had great day teaching eager-to-learn students about oyster aquaculture, oyster history, oyster biology, and oyster anatomy." About 80 students between the ages of 8 and 12 participated in five classes, culminating with a class of 12 students at Camp KeKoKa, Kilmarnock, Virginia.



Brian Wood speaks to a class from the Kilmarnock Boys and Girls Club about oyster anatomy and the role that oysters play in the health of the Chesapeake Bay.



*Mike Sanders explains the lifecycle of the Eastern oyster (*crassostrea virginica*) to middle school students as part of the "Save the World" event at the Kilmarnock Boys and Girls Club.*

Recap: TOGA Partners with Hampton City School Oyster Gardeners: August 11, 2022

*~Betsy McAllister, Hampton City Schools
STEM Teacher Specialist*



Vic Spain explains oyster gardening to enthusiastic and attentive teachers from Hampton City Schools

Master Oyster Gardeners Vic Spain, Brian Ingram, and Lou Castagnola were "forces of nature" in helping to train 11 [Hampton City School](#) (HCS) educators and oyster gardening novices at the [Hampton History Museum](#) on August 11th from 9 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. Vic has worked with Betsy McAllister, HCS STEM Teacher Specialist, since the spring to develop the training. In addition, he helped make arrangements for the 11,000 healthy spat the HCS Science Department purchased from Oyster Gardening, LLC so the school division can continue to grow the number of teachers and students raising oysters in the Hampton and Back Rivers.

Vic, Brian, and Lou arrived at the museum with their knowledge and enthusiasm, as well as the spat and 22 cleverly-engineered spat and oyster cages donated by TOGA. Vic discussed the differences between aquaculture and wild oysters and opened sample oysters so teachers could see their insides and their differences, engaging them in a discussion of diploid and triploid oysters that life science and biology teachers can use to reinforce genetics concepts.

Vic demonstrated for teachers how, and explained when, they would use the spat and oyster cages. Brian, Lou, and Vic each guided a small group of teachers as they finished the construction of their spat cages – securing the mesh liners, attaching hinges to the top, adding the closure hook and tie line. The trio accompanied teachers to Dandy Haven Marina to help teachers christen their spat by placing them in the water.

Teachers will be bringing their oysters into the classroom periodically for students to learn more about their benefits, make and record measurements, and learn about the many organisms that make the oyster reef their home.

Recap: TOGA's Youth Lecture Series at Camp Kekoka, Summer 2022

~Vic Spain, MOG and Richard Siciliano, MOG

Master Oyster Gardeners headed by Brian Wood, and assisted by Ann Wood, Mike Sanders, Vic Spain, Doug Schaefer, and Richard Siciliano, gave a series of weekly lectures and hands-on demonstrations to YMCA and Alexandria Police Youth Camp summer campers on six Wednesdays in July and August 2022, at Camp Kekoka in Kilmarnock.



Brian Wood talks with campers and demonstrates oyster anatomy by dissecting an oyster

The talks emphasized how oysters are great filter feeders (one adult oyster can filter 50

gallons of water, or more, each day) that improve Chesapeake Bay health and create an aquatic habitat for countless critters. The campers witnessed oysters clearing murky water in an aquarium, and they assisted the MOGs as they dissected an oyster as they explained oyster anatomy. Also discussed was Chesapeake Bay oyster history and how important it is to recycle oyster shells to help the Bay recover its health and for oysters to restore their reefs.

More than 300 youngsters attended the summer camp at Camp Kekoka, and most attended the TOGA lecture series. The campers originated from nine states (VA, MD, D.C., FL, TX, AZ, CA, NC, NY, and two campers from Vienna, Austria.



"The Oyster Toss"- Campers wrote on oyster shells and tossed them into the Bay for new spat to attach to. Here, a camper holds a clump of oysters found near shore, evidence that young oysters flourish in Camp Kekoka's waters to help clean the Bay.



Master Oyster Gardener Vic Spain answers campers' questions about oysters in TOGAs aquarium.

TOGA Launches New Website

~Sue Borra, Vic Spain, MOGs

TOGA members and partners have always found the TOGA website to be a robust oyster gardening resource that provides a tremendous amount of valuable information. This year, TOGA made a significant investment in updating the website to improve its visual appeal, navigation, organization, and ease of use on smart phones and tablets

The project team included TOGA webmaster, Vic Spain, and TOGA Board members, Russell Mait and Sue Borra, along with our website designer, Rick Tibbetts.

The new website was launched in June 2022, and TOGA has received many accolades for its user-friendly design and ease of locating important information.

The new site contains a great deal of the same content as the old, but there is new content that we hope you find interesting. Under the Education and Science heading, "About Oysters,"

<https://www.oystergardener.org/about-oysters>, we display the brand new "free-to-use" Oyster Life Cycle diagram arranged for with an artist by Carl Zulick. Carl also designed a highly detailed graphic of oyster anatomy. And you will find a link to a YouTube video on Oyster Anatomy and Dissection. Try watching this while dissecting your own oyster. It's a great learning experience for kids of all ages. Be careful with that knife.

Further down under "About Oysters," there is a great article provided by our VIMS Advisor Karen Hudson on the TOGA/VIMS Partnership. And under "Oyster History," we recognize the rich history of the Powhatan Native Americans and how they benefitted from oysters, especially at Kiskiack which was located at what



is now the Yorktown Naval Weapons Station. But finally under "About Oysters," our Oyster Recipes page is really slim, so please email us with your favorite oyster recipe.

We know you will find the new website to a valuable resource and please reach out to let us know what you think or if you have any additional suggestions:

vicspain@rocketmail.com

TOGA invited to The Urbanna Oyster Festival's Education Day: Thursday, November 3, 2022

~Richard Siciliano, MOG

TOGA will take part in Oyster Festival Education Day on November 3, 2022, in conjunction with the Urbanna Oyster Festival scheduled for that weekend. Middlesex High School students, along with elementary and middle school students, will visit the TOGA exhibit for hands-on learning activities



focusing on Bay ecology and will learn the about oyster aquaculture and the importance of the oyster to the health of the Chesapeake Bay. If you are a TOGA member and would like to volunteer to help at the exhibit tent, contact Richard Siciliano: rjsiciliano@yahoo.com

Education Day is hosted by the Marine Science Legacy Program of the Urbanna Oyster Festival, whereby students from area schools take their learning out of the classroom and have the opportunity to immerse themselves in hands-on activities relevant to the community where they live.

The TOGA Speakers Bureau

~Brian Wood, MOG

Did you know that many TOGA members like to talk about Oysters? Yes, we have a group of public speakers, many of whom are Master



Oyster Gardeners (MOGs), who are eager and willing to come to your club, group, or organization and talk about Oysters and Chesapeake Bay. Topics include Oyster Gardening, the history of

Oysters in the Bay, and Oyster Biology.

We get invited to speak to many diverse groups throughout the Northern Neck, Middle Peninsula, and the Lower Tidewater Area, including Williamsburg.

If you would like a TOGA member to talk at your upcoming event, contact Vic Spain at vicspain@rocketmail.com or (804) 413-1020 or Doug Schaefer at subiceguy@hotmail.com or (804) 580-1456, or the TOGA President Emeritus for Education, Brian Wood at: awood45858@aol.com.

Proposed: TOGA Dues Increase

~Doug Schaefer, President, TOGA Board of Directors

After much analysis and review, the TOGA Board of Directors is proposing to raise the Annual Dues (last set in 2014) from \$15.00 to \$25.00 starting January 2023. Our organization by-laws require that dues changes be approved by the general TOGA membership. The TOGA Board will present the proposal to increase dues to \$25.00 at our next Annual Meeting in January 2023.

If you wish to comment on this increase, please contact any TOGA Board member with your thoughts. All comments submitted will be considered by the full TOGA Board.

Are Your Dues Due for 2022?

If you received this newsletter in the mail, please check the year next to your name on the address label. If it is 2021 or earlier, then 2022 dues are due for your membership



to remain current. If you believe there is an error, please contact Vic Spain at vicspain@rocketmail.com or 804-642-6764. Pending approval by the TOGA membership for a dues increase, starting in January 2023, the annual membership will be \$25 (per family) for one calendar year, not 12 months, from payment date.

TOGA Member Benefits:

- 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
- *Opportunity to enroll free of charge for planned web-based continuing education courses, starting with OYS-101: Orientation to Oyster Gardening.

Go to the TOGA website to become a member:
<https://www.oystergardener.org/become-a-member>, or use the form at the end of this newsletter to update your membership. You may also use the link or the form 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.

Essay Contest for Middle School Students Can Win Cash Prizes

~Terry Lewis, MOG

The Tidewater Oyster Gardeners Association (TOGA) is again offering Middle School Students an opportunity to show off their writing skills and win substantial prizes.

After very successful Middle School Writing Contests the past nine years, TOGA is offering prizes of \$500, \$250, and \$100 for first, second, and third places respectively for the top essays. A prize of \$200 will also be awarded to the school of the top entry. The theme of the essays is "Consider the Oyster"- a wide-open category that must include an essay that has anything to do with oysters.

The competition is open to all Virginia students in grades 6, 7 and 8, and home-schooled students are welcome to enter.

Winners will be announced at the TOGA annual membership meeting in January, 2023.

The three top winners will be published on the TOGA Web site, and may be published in other publications or web sites, including the Virginia Outdoor Writers Association website.

The essays should be written in Microsoft Word format and submitted as email attachments by December 15, 2022. For more information, to view the entry form, and to see last year's winners and their essays, go to www.oystergardener.org and click on *Middle School Writing Contest*.

Tidewater Oyster Gardeners Association
and C&F Bank

Middle School Writing Competition

Open to all Virginia Middle School Students (Grades 6-8)

Essay Theme:
"Consider the Oyster"

Prizes: \$500, \$250, \$100
\$200 Prize to the School of the First Place Entry

Contest Deadline: December 15

Go to www.oystergardener.org for more information.

Great chance to have your writing published!!

TOGA
Tidewater Oyster Gardeners Association

Tidewater Oyster Gardeners

Middle School Writing Contest General Competition Guidelines

1. Open to all Virginia Middle School students, including home schooled students.
2. Nonfiction only, with the theme "Consider the Oyster." Writers will create their own title for the article—other than using the words of the theme listed above. Student's name, grade/school, and home town must be printed in three lines at the top right hand corner on each page of the entry.
3. Length: a firm 500-750 words which must be typed, double-spaced.
4. Electronic submissions are encouraged; send as a Microsoft Word or plain text attachment to the competition coordinator listed below.
5. Send essays with the completed submission form found on the Tidewater Oyster Gardeners website: www.oystergardener.org
6. By submitting the article to the competition, permission is granted by the parent(s) and student for TOGA to post or publish the article in publications or web sites as deemed appropriate by the TOGA Competition Judges, with compensation being limited to writer credit to the student author in order to reward and recognize writing excellence, and to promote the competition throughout the year.
7. Submissions not meeting the competition guidelines and criteria will be disqualified.
8. **Submission deadline: December 15.**
9. Send the submission form and essay via email (preferred) to:
lewistmn@msn.com
 Subject: Middle School Writing Competition Submission

Or print form, complete and send with article as specified via postal mail to:

Terry Lewis
 Middle School Writing Competition
 11339 Water View Place
 Gloucester, VA 23061



**If you have questions please call 804-693-2687.
 Good Luck!**

Donor Needed to Fund the TOGA Middle School Writing Contest

Last year, TOGA lost its funding support from the C&F Bank, and we are looking for a new sponsor willing to donate about \$1000 to support awards for this annual activity. Each year, we enjoy hearing the students' essays at our Annual Meeting in January. If you have a suggestion or know a business that would like recognition for a good cause, please contact Terry Lewis at 804-693-2687.

Be Aware of the Symptoms of *Vibrio*.

~Terry Lewis, MOG



Enteropathogenic vibrios

A few weeks ago, I was rushing to repair my jet-ski lifts shortly after cleaning numerous oyster floats. We have a sand beach and bottom, so we usually just wade out in our bathing suits and water shoes and work in the waters of the Piankatank River.

When I was nearly finished removing some old carpeting from the lifts, the sky blackened, and I was in the midst of a violent thunderstorm. Rushing to get out of the water and secure my tools and some of the oyster floats, I was glad to get back in the house.

A few days later I noticed a small bright red area on my right ankle, which felt like a chemical burn when I touched it. I put a generic antiseptic on it and went forward with chores to prepare for the three grandchildren to arrive

from Buffalo. They love playing in the water and my wife makes sure they have what they call a "leach bath" (so named when they were very young and hated it) as soon as the day's fun in the water concludes. A leach bath is about two capfuls of bleach in a nearly full bath tub of hot water.

Paying a little more attention to my own health, I noticed the following day the bright red area grew, and in just a few days my wife, who is a nurse, measured it to be 4½ inches by 5½ inches, and insisted I call my physician.

Fortunately for me, he scheduled an appointment very early the next morning. After a shot with an enormous needle of antibiotic in each butt cheek, and a regimen of *oxycycline* for 10 days, I'm pleased to report that the infection is now gone. But I'm still kicking myself for my carelessness. We always have a small spray bottle of peroxide on our pier, and I always demand that anyone who goes in the water immediately spray any open sores as soon as they get out. And I almost always have a leach bath. But I forgot that rule for myself, and it could have been disastrous!

What exactly is *Vibrio*? I'm not sure if what I had was *vibrio*, but it was definitely a saltwater-borne bacteria that entered my ankle from a tiny open wound. But *vibrio* comes in many different species, so I looked it up at the CDC website. Here's a summary:

1. *Vibriosis* causes an estimated 80,000 illnesses and 100 deaths in the United States every year.
2. *Vibrio* bacteria naturally live in certain coastal waters and are present in higher concentrations between May and October when water temperatures are warmer.
3. About a dozen *Vibrio* species can cause human illness, known as *vibriosis*. Most people become infected by eating raw or undercooked shellfish, particularly oysters. Certain *Vibrio* species can also cause a skin infection when an open

wound is exposed to salt water or brackish water.

4. Most people with a mild case of *vibriosis* recover after about three days with no lasting effects. However, people with a *Vibrio vulnificus* infection can get seriously ill and need intensive care or limb amputation. About 1 in 5 people with this type of infection die, sometimes within a day or two of becoming ill.
5. When ingested, *Vibrio* bacteria can cause watery diarrhea, often accompanied by abdominal cramping, nausea, vomiting, fever, and chills. Usually these symptoms occur within 24 hours of ingestion and last about 3 days. Severe illness is rare and typically occurs in people with a weakened immune system.

You can reduce your risk of *vibriosis* by following these tips:

- Don't eat raw or undercooked oysters or other shellfish. Cook them before eating.
- Always **wash your hands** with soap and water after handling raw shellfish.
- Avoid contaminating cooked shellfish with raw shellfish and its juices.
- Stay out of salt water or brackish water if you have a wound (including from a recent surgery, piercing, or tattoo), or cover your wound with a waterproof bandage if there's a possibility it could come into contact with salt water or brackish water, raw seafood, or raw seafood juices.
- Wash wounds and cuts thoroughly with soap and water if they have been exposed to seawater or raw seafood or its juices.
- If you develop a skin infection, tell your medical provider if your skin has come into contact with salt water or brackish water, raw seafood, or raw seafood juices.

be treated immediately and recommends these steps:

1. Flush out the wound with sterile water. Use bottled water if you are on a boat. Do not use seawater.
2. Wash the wound with soap and water.
3. Flush and clean the wound with hydrogen peroxide. Disinfect with a generous application of Betadine. Hydrogen peroxide and Betadine are available at all drug stores and should be included as part of your first aid kit on your boat and/or pier.
4. If your wound starts to swell and turn bright red, go immediately to the closest emergency room. Inform the attending physician about the injury and that it was exposed to saltwater. Tell the ER physician you suspect vibrio infection.

And finally, I found a strong suggestion in a Louisiana fisherman's website, that you can't go wrong taking the dreaded "leach bath."

Have fun growing and eating oysters. I've done it for years, but this one time I got careless. I hope I've learned from my mistake, and I hope this bit of caution will help you to continue growing oysters for a healthier Bay.

Dr. Jay Grimes, Professor of Marine Microbiology at the Gulf Coast Research Laboratory in Ocean Springs, Mississippi, said any wound exposed to warm salt water should



Carl Zulick shows two very important visitors the new display he designed for Oyster Day at York River State Park, on April 2nd.



Vic Spain (yellow cap) uses his boat hook pointer at the TOGA kiosk in Camp Kekoka to emphasize to the YMCA/APSC summer campers a fine point about the history of oysters in the Chesapeake Bay.



TOGA President Doug Schaefer (left) and Vic Spain (right) shucking at the Volunteer Appreciation Party, scheduled this year for November 19th, at Camp Kekoka, Kilmarnock, VA.

Newsletter News: Call for Articles



The TOGA Newsletter is published three times a year and is mailed to all TOGA members. Full color copies of this edition and past newsletters are available on the website at

<https://www.oystergardener.org/newsletters-1>

The deadline for articles for the Winter '23 newsletter is November 21, 2022. TOGA members who wish to submit articles may do so by the deadline date. Articles will be printed as space allows. Email your article to Vic Spain at vicspain@rocketmail.com, or Kathy Haurand at: kathaurand@aol.com, or Richard Siciliano at: rjsiciliano@yahoo.com

Many TOGA projects, including our newsletters, are funded by the Chesapeake Bay Restoration Fund., aka the *License Plate Fund*.



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



Many thanks to our past and present Board of Directors, the Virginia Institute of Marine Science (VIMS), our partners including Seaglass Wines, and all TOGA members who make this newsletter possible.

Placing your Amazon orders through *Amazon Smile* (smile.amazon.com) is a simple and automatic way for you to support your favorite charity or non-profit, such as TOGA, every time you shop, at no additional cost to you.



TOGA Fall 2022 Upcoming Events

(as of August 8, 2022)

For an up-to-date calendar: <https://www.oystergardener.org/schedule/>

- August 9, 2022: TOGA Board of Directors Meeting 10:00 – 11:30 AM Deltaville Maritime Museum, 287 Jackson Creek Rd, Deltaville, VA 23043
- August 11, 2022: Hampton Schools/TOGA Team Building Day, time TBD, Sandy Bottom Nature Park, 1255 Big Bethel Rd, Hampton, VA 23669, Event Coordinators: Vic Spain (vicspain@rocketmail.com), Betsy McAllister (Hampton Schools).
- August 27, 2022: “Holly Point Market Day” TOGA Education Table, 9AM-1PM, Event Coordinator: Carl Zulick, czulick@verizon.net, Deltaville Maritime Museum, 287 Jackson Creek Rd., Deltaville, VA 23043
- September 2, 2022: Montross First Fridays 5:30 – 9:00 PM, Event Coordinator: Doug Schaefer, subiceguy@hotmail.com, Green space between Carrot Cottage and Bridget's Bouquets, Montross, VA 22520
- September 13, 2022: Board of Directors Meeting 10:00 – 11:30 AM Virginia Institute of Marine Science, Davis Hall Room 101, 1370 Greate Rd, Gloucester Point, VA 23062
- September 17, 2022: Heathsville Farmers Market “Living History Day” - Event Coordinator: Richard Siciliano, rjsiciliano@yahoo.com, Historic Rice's Hotel / Hughlett's Tavern, 73 Monument Place, Heathsville, VA 22473, 9AM – 1PM
- September 17, 2022: Northern Neck Land Conservancy Boots and BBQ—Event Coordinator: Sue Borra sue.borra@gmail.com, Waterloo Farm, 15689 Owens Drive, King George VA 22485, 10AM—2PM
- September 17, 2022: York River State Park Estuaries Day, Event Coordinator: Vic Spain vicspain@rocketmail.com York River State Park, 9801 York River Park Rd, Williamsburg, VA 23188
- September 23 & 24, 2022: Guinea Jubilee – Event Coordinator: Coordinator Mark Besore markbesore@gmail.com, 8784 Guinea Rd., Hayes, VA 23072 3PM-6PM Fri. and 9AM-5PM Sat.
- September 28 & 29, 2022: Chesapeake Oyster Alliance Science Symposium at The Tides Inn, Event Coordinator: Doug Schaefer subiceguy@hotmail.com 480 King Carter Drive, Irvington, VA 22480
- **Good Luck Cellars, 1025 Good Luck Road, Kilmarnock, VA 22482; Time 11:00 AM to 2:00PM.**
- October 15, 2022: Fall Oyster Float Sale 11 a.m-2 p. m. , **Good Luck Cellars, 1025 Good Luck Road, Kilmarnock, VA.** Event Coordinator: Doug Schaefer, bandbingram@gmail.com.
- October 8, 2022: Virginia Homegrown Festival at Flat Iron Crossroads-- Event Coordinator: Carl Zulick, czulick@verizon.net, Flat Iron Crossroads, 7709 Flat Iron Rd, Gloucester, VA 23061, USA
- October 11, 2022: TOGA Board of Directors Meeting 10:00 – 11:30 AM, Indian Creek Yacht & Country Club, 362 Club Drive, Kilmarnock, VA 22482, Commodore's Room
- November 3, 2022: Urbanna Oyster Festival Education Day, Event Coordinator Richard Siciliano, rjsiciliano@yahoo.com
- November 8, 2022: TOGA Board of Directors Meeting 10:00 – 11:30 AM, Deltaville Maritime Museum, 287 Jackson Creek Rd, Deltaville, VA 23043
- November 12 & 13, 2022: Oysters, Wine & Music Float Sales Event - Event Coordinator: Doug Schaefer, subiceguy@hotmail.com, Good Luck Cellars, 1025 Goodluck Rd, Kilmarnock, VA 22482 12 noon – 4PM (both days)
- November 19, 2022: TOGA Volunteer “Thank You” Appreciation Party, Camp Kekoka, 1083 Boys Camp Rd, Kilmarnock, VA 22482, 1PM – 4PM. Event coordinator: Terry Lewis, lewistmn@msm.com
- December 13, 2022: TOGA Board of Directors Meeting 10:00 – 11:30 AM, AM Virginia Institute of Marine Science, Davis Hall Room 101, 1370 Greate Rd, Gloucester Point, VA 23062
- December 15, 2022: Middle School Writing Contest Essays due, Event Coordinator: Terry Lewis, lewistmn@msm.com. Go to the TOGA Website for details: www.oystergardener.org
- January 21, 2023: TOGA Annual Membership Meeting, Sponsored by the Virginia Institute of Marine Science

TOGA Membership Form

P.O. Box 2463, Gloucester, VA 23061

Join online: <https://www.oystergardener.org/become-a-member>

Date: _____ Please check one: _____ New Member _____ Renewal Annual Dues are \$25*
(effective 2023, pending approval by TOGA membership at the Annual Meeting in January 2023)

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)

Be a Proud TOGA Volunteer



Sign up to Volunteer

Please fill out the TOGA volunteer form at:
<https://www.oystergardener.org/volunteer>

Or, scan the QR code on the right with your smart phone.
Tell us what you enjoy doing so we can let you know of
volunteer opportunities.



Oyster Float Sale Order Form

Camp Kekoka, Kilmarnock, VA October 15, 2022

1083 Boys Camp Road, Kilmarnock, VA. 22482

This form is an alternative to online ordering. We prefer that you order floats online at:

<https://www.oystergardener.org/fall-float-sale/> Please mail this Order Form to TOGA, P.O. Box 2463, Gloucester, VA 23061. Or, email a scanned copy to Vic Spain: vicspain@rocketmail.com

Name: _____ E-mail: _____

Telephone: _____ Mailing Address: _____

This Order Form MUST BE RECEIVED BY October 1, 2022, for TOGA to have sufficient materials available for your pre-built float(s) and devices.

Pre-Built Floats and Devices

For more information about the various types of Pre-Built Floats and Devices, please see the TOGA website: <https://www.oystergardener.org/devices-and-designs/>

Prices listed below are for TOGA members. Non-members, please add \$15 for each item ordered, or join TOGA by October 1st to take advantage of these member prices: <https://www.oystergardener.org/become-a-member>

Payment for floats and devices will be collected when you pick up your floats. Checks preferred, cash OK. No credit cards please. Pick up your floats by 11am, or notify Vic Spain: vicspain@rocketmail.com.

Qty	Cost each TOGA members	Description	Qty	Cost each TOGA members	Description
	\$125	Taylor Float with Top		\$75	Flip Float
	\$65	Bottom Cage		\$60	Tidal Tumbler (wire lids)
	\$55	Rough Rider		\$30	Spat Tube (small mesh)
	\$30	Spat Tube (med mesh)		\$50	Bender 42 inch
	\$55	Bender 50 inch			

Build Your Own Floats at a TOGA Float Build Workday

3 Float Limit, \$10 discount per float

TOGA members can take advantage of discount prices on floats and cages by participating at one or more TOGA workdays prior to the October Oyster Float Sale at Camp Kekoka, 1083 Boys Camp Road, Kilmarnock, VA. 22482. **Workday DATES:** Wednesday, September 14th, 10am-1pm, and Saturday, October 8th, 10am-1pm. Register for the Float Workday (and your discount) by contacting Vic Spain: vicspain@rocketmail.com

I would like _____ (quantity) Taylor Float with Top at \$115 per float.

I would like _____ (quantity) Flip Floats at \$65 per float.

I would like _____ (quantity) Bottom Cages at \$55 per cage.

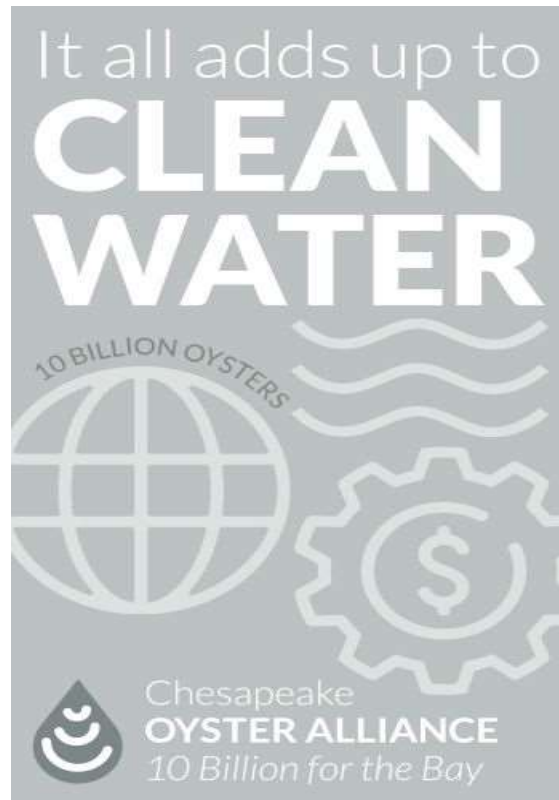
I would like _____ (quantity) Tidal Tumbler at \$50 per float.

I would like _____ (quantity) Rough Rider at \$45 per cage.

PO Box 2463
Gloucester, VA 23061

Return Service Requested

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



Growing oysters for a cleaner Bay