



Growing oysters for a cleaner Bay

Spring 2022

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

2022 TOGA Annual Meeting

I would like to start by thanking **Karen Hudson** our Virginia Institute of Marine Science (VIMS) 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 2022 Virtual TOGA Annual Meeting would not have occurred without her.

The Annual Meeting keynote speaker was Dr. Bill Walton, Acuff Professor of Marine Science and Coordinator of the Shellfish Aquaculture Program at VIMS. He discussed beneficial effects of shellfish aquaculture on water quality and other potential benefits of shellfish aquaculture to the public. He provided a remarkable question and answer session.

The Covid-19 pandemic had an effect on TOGA as in the rest of the world. But with the lemons we tried to make lemonade. 2021 started with our Virtual Annual Meeting at VIMS where we had a Virtual turnout of 90 people for the Writing Contest winners and our annual business meeting.

TOGA volunteers held 13 Oyster Education Outreach events. These included the Heathsville Farmers Market, Good Luck Cellars Oyster celebrations, Deltaville Maritime Museum "Holly Point Market" days, and the Montross First Friday events where we shared a spot with Westmoreland State Park to show their new Oyster Garden growth during its first year. Thanks to Sue Borra, TOGA was invited to assist Westmoreland State Park in creating an Oyster Garden and Oyster History display for the second most visited (over 300,000 people per year) Virginia Park, with its location along the Potomac River.

In association with the Chesapeake Bay Restoration Fund, TOGA completed Oyster History

and Gardening Exhibits at both the Deltaville Maritime Museum and the Yorktown Waterman's Museum. Carl Zulick our lead for this effort built an in-water Oyster Garden for the Deltaville Maritime Museum. It's a great place to take children if you want to provide them a hands-on experience with an Oyster Garden.

TOGA Float building efforts were outstanding in 2021. We held 6 Float building workshops at Camp Kekoka in Kilmarnock. These were very well attended by our volunteers, and we needed all the support we could get because we sold the largest number (142) of floats (including Spat Tubes) ever this year. Vic Spain and his engineers also developed 2 different sizes of Spat Tubes to be used in the Tidal Tumblers that have become popular in the last couple of years.

We were able to meet face to face for our volunteer appreciation party in October. It was great to get together with our volunteer community and celebrate their support by having an afternoon of Oysters and favorite beverages.

In addition, TOGA also holds Oyster Education Outreach events for school systems in our membership area. In 2021 this included Middlesex County, Hampton City, and Newport News Schools. The response we received to these events was amazing. My favorite, "Just being here. I mean, my students haven't been able to go on a field trip for over a year, so your being here is wonderful!" That's according to Lowery VanBuskirk, a math and social studies teacher at Middlesex Elementary School.

TOGA was also very successful in conducting our 9th Annual Middle School Writing Contest. Our school system outreach allowed us to have an increased number and higher quality entries. To see the winners and hear from them on their effort

please go to
<https://www.oystergardener.org/winners> .

TOGA continues to publish the newsletter you are reading three times a year. 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).
--Doug Schaefer, MOG

2022 Middle School Essay Contest

Congratulations to the Winners of the TOGA 2021 Youth Writing Contest "Consider the Oyster", announced at the Jan. 22, 2022 Annual Meeting

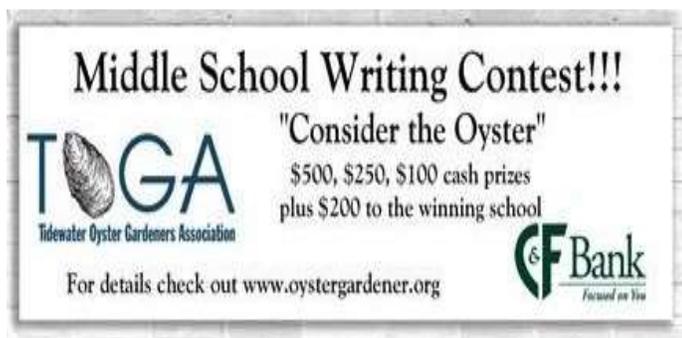
First place: Elena Contreras, 7th Grade, Homeschooled, Richmond, VA

Second place: Fenton Johnson, 8th Grade, Mathews, VA

Third Place Tie: Arabelle Elliot, 7th Grade, Homeschooled, Charlottesville, VA
Andrew Cough, 7th Grade, Homeschooled, Palmyra, VA

Honorable Mentions:

Hunter Owens, 7th Grade, Thomas Hunter Middle School, Mathews, VA
Olivia Smart, 6th Grade, Homeschooled, Heathsville, VA
Nathan Rafael, 5th Grade, Chesapeake Academy, Weems, VA
Miriam Sisson, 5th Grade, Chesapeake Academy, Farnham, VA



Middle School Writing Contest!!!
TOGA "Consider the Oyster"
\$500, \$250, \$100 cash prizes
plus \$200 to the winning school
For details check out www.oystergardener.org
TOGA Tidewater Oyster Gardeners Association
CF Bank Focused on You

The Winning 2021 Youth Paper

By Elena Contreras 7th Grade, Homeschooled Richmond, Virginia

Do You Consider the Oyster? When you think of a pearl, you most likely think of jewelry. But do you think about how it is made or where it is from? Do you think about the pain it causes when it is being made? Unlike most gems, it is not made underground but by an oyster.



Oysters are a type of mollusk or shellfish. They live on the seafloor near the shore in shallow water. An oyster's body has a mantle, gills, a mouth, an adductor muscle, a stomach, and a heart. Its shell is held together by a hinge. The shell has an inner layer and the Umbo, or beak, which is the oldest part of the shell. When a particle of sand, shell, or some other small substance gets into the oyster's mantle, it causes pain and could hurt the oyster's body. To protect itself, the oyster covers the particle with thin sheets of mother-of-pearl, or nacre. They build on the particle until it is covered in a shell-like substance: a pearl.

Now that you know what a pearl is, do you think oysters are only good for making pearls? If you do, you are one hundred percent wrong! Oysters are useful in many ways. People have been eating oysters for thousands of years, and they can be eaten in many different ways, like oyster stew. I, myself, am allergic to shellfish, but I recommended looking for oyster recipes and making them.

Now oysters don't just benefit people by giving us food, jobs, and precious pearls, but also other plants and animals living in and around the water with them. Oysters give other animals shelter. When a baby oyster is choosing a place to settle down, it may settle on a rock or another oyster. Over time, oysters can pile up, one on top of another, making a large oyster bed or reef with lots of nooks and crannies for fish, eels, crabs, and other animals to call home. Oysters clean the surrounding water. When they are feeding, they filter out pollutants and sediment from the water to find the phytoplankton or algae they eat. An adult oyster can filter up to 50 gallons of water a day. That's a lot of water! They also help prevent erosion and hold silt on the water banks. So, oysters give other animals shelter, clean water to

live in, and, for predators, a place to find a lot of prey.

Considering all that oysters do for us and our environment, what do we do for them? What do we do besides over-polluting the bay with nitrogen, phosphorus, pesticides, and other harmful substances? What do we do besides over-harvesting wild oysters, destroying oyster reefs, and leaving the bay and ocean floor covered with silt so that baby oysters have no place to settle down? In 1888, it was said that oysters could clean the whole Chesapeake Bay, which has eighteen trillion gallons of water in it, in days. But nowadays, it would take oysters about a year to clean the same amount. So, now we have a different question to answer. What CAN we do for the oysters, for the bay, and for the other animals living in and around the bay? Here are some ways you can help:

- **Recycle Used Oyster Shells:** You can recycle oyster shells at centers like the Chesapeake Bay Foundation's Brock Environmental Center where they clean the shells, let baby oysters settle on them, and put them in the Chesapeake Bay. There the oysters will grow and filter the water.
- **Plant Trees and Plants on the Banks:** By planting trees, bushes, flowers, and other plants, you can help prevent erosion on the banks of the bay. This helps the oysters have a solid place to settle and form reefs. Otherwise, they will sink in the loose silt and die.
- **Don't Use Chemicals:** Use less pesticides and other chemicals. If possible, try to use natural alternatives that will be healthier for the environment.
- **Don't Over-Harvest Oysters:** When you harvest wild oysters, don't harvest a whole area or day after day. Give oysters a chance to grow back. Consider the ocean and the bay. Consider the fish, crabs, eels, and plants. Consider the oyster.

Consider what you can do.

Oyster Day at York River State Park

Saturday, April 2, 2022

10:00 am - 2:00 pm

9801 York River Park Rd
Williamsburg, VA 23188



Discover the ecological and economic importance of Virginia's favorite bivalve.

Oysters once existed in reefs so large that ships ran aground on them. Today's harvest is 1% of what it was 100 years ago. We will have interactive displays from organizations and businesses striving to increase their numbers. The Tidewater Oyster Gardeners Association, Capahosic Oyster Company, Virginia Institute of Marine Science and others will have displays about the work they do and information about this keystone creature of a healthy Chesapeake region.

This article provided by:

<https://www.findyourchesapeake.com/events/detail/oyster-day-at-york-river-sp/>



Part of TOGA Display along with oyster floats and spat to be donated to York River State Park

TOGA Outreach at the Heathsville Farmers Market “Earth Day”, April 16

There are always a lot of reasons to visit Heathsville, but Saturday, April 16 is one of the best days to “Make It a Heathsville Saturday.” The entire community is coming together to offer a variety of fun shopping and things to do in conjunction with the Heathsville Farmers Market “Earth Day Celebration”. You can find more about the market Rice’s Hotel/ Hughlett’s Tavern website <https://www.rhhtfoundationinc.org/>

TOGA will have their education outreach tent there to discuss Oyster Gardening and Growing Oysters for a cleaner Bay. If you wish to volunteer for this event, please contact our TOGA Event Coordinator: Doug Schaefer at, subiceguy@hotmail.com . The Market takes place at Historic Rice's Hotel / Hughlett's Tavern, 73 Monument Place, Heathsville, VA 22473, 9AM to 1 PM.

Good Luck Cellars Corks and Oysters Weekend

TOGA is planning to have a shelluva good time at Good Luck Cellars on 23 and 24 April 2022 — oyster dishes, wine pairings, and live music are what’s in store.

- Saturday 23 April hours are 11-4 (winery glass and bottles sales available). Salty Bob’s Oyster & Seafood Co (Food Truck) service will be on site. There will be a variety of music from Hard to Tell (Rockabilly & Blues) Band will perform on Saturday 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.
- Sunday 24 April hours are 12-4 (winery glass and bottles sales available). Salty Bob’s Oyster & Seafood Co (Food Truck) service will be on site. Marc Carraway of Scuffletown (blues, bluegrass, reggae, calypso & original music) will perform Sunday 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.

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.

2022 Middle Peninsula Spring Oyster Fair, April 23

The TOGA-sponsored Annual Spring Oyster Fair will be held April 23 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.

Outdoor Event This Year- When planning this we did not know what the Covid19 situation would be in April, 2022. There will be no sit-down education program inside the building. **However, at 9am, coffee, fruit, breakfast rolls, etc. will be set up inside and the restrooms will be open.**

9:00 to 11:00 – 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 weather. Normally, spat are larger this time of year because they were spawned in the previous fall.

TOGA will have our educational tent set up with displays and handouts. Although we prefer that dues be paid at <https://www.oystergardener.org/join-toga>, we will be able to process new members, check your membership status and accept dues. Please remember to have exact change or a check book.

This is also a good time to question Master Oyster Gardeners and vendors about your gardening issues. In deference to the vendors, TOGA will not be selling anything, but we will be demonstrating some of our latest equipment and construction techniques.

--Vic Spain, MOG

TOGA @ Williamsburg Spring Festival April 24, 2022

TOGA is supporting an outreach event during the Williamsburg Spring Festival. This is to be in the City Square in front of the Williamsburg Regional Library at 515 Scotland St on April 24, from 1 to 4pm. This is the same day as the Williamsburg Art on the Square event in the Williamsburg Merchant Square. TOGA will be informing people of the Williamsburg area about what we do and about how to grow oysters. Come see our display in Williamsburg, VA. For more information or to support this event, please email MarkBesore@gmail.com



Williamsburg Spring Festival. This is to be in the City Square in front of the Williamsburg Regional Library at 515 Scotland St on April 24, from 1 to 4pm. This is the same day as the

Williamsburg Art on the Square event in the Williamsburg Merchant Square. TOGA will be informing people of the Williamsburg area about what we do and about how to grow oysters. Come see our display in Williamsburg, VA. For more information or to support this event, please email MarkBesore@gmail.com

Deltaville Maritime Museum and Holly Point Market Event, May 28

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 28 from 9am to 12pm. 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 14. See order form below.

See <https://www.oystergardener.org/devices-and-designs> for a description of our floats and devices. 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

Introducing the Rough Rider Cage

Especially for oyster gardeners who live directly on the large rivers or Chesapeake Bay, we designed a cage similar to the Tidal Tumbler, but with key differences.

The wave energy on the large water bodies can damage some oyster floats and cages. Our Bottom Cage works 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. It hangs from your dock just like the Tidal Tumbler. But there are no plastic surfaces (like PVC pipe or paint lids) that can cause a cage to bang against pilings etc. because of their hydrodynamic surfaces. And 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.

--Vic Spain, MOG

To order a float, please go to

<https://www.oystergardener.org/springfloatsale> and click on the order form link at the top left. This order form creates a record on our files and returns a copy of your order to you by email. Prices are listed below. Payments are due when you pick up your float. If you cannot be at the sales event, you can ask us ahead of time 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 unclaimed and unreserved floats will go on sale to walkups.**

Your choice of floats can be seen at the order form at the end of the newsletter. Orders must be received by May 14 for TOGA to have sufficient materials available for pre-built floats.

Note- Nonmembers, there will be a \$15 surcharge per device in lieu of joining TOGA. See <https://www.oystergardener.org/join-toga>

These items will also be 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 not to order online, you may use the Order Form located at the end of this newsletter or on our website <https://www.oystergardener.org/springfloatsale> where you can download a manual order form for “pre-built” or “build your own” floats. You may submit this completed form by mail or email to vicspain@rocketmail.com or bandbingram@gmail.com. The schedule for our float workdays is Saturday, April 9, 10am-1pm, and Tuesday, May 17, 10am-1pm at Camp Kekoka, 1083 Boys Camp Rd, Kilmarnock VA 22482.

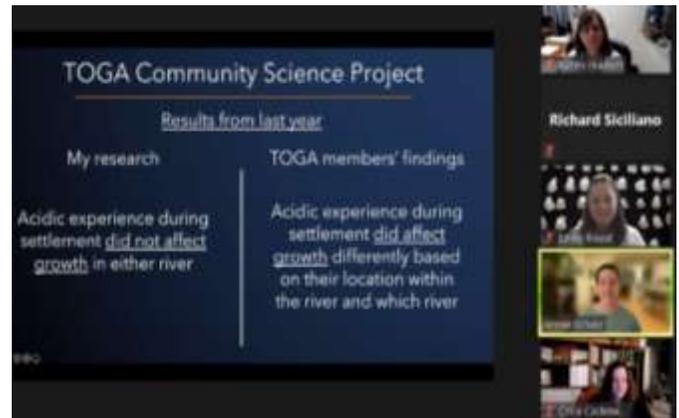
We hope you can join us at Deltaville in May.

TOGA Members Join Virtual Happy Hour Seminars on Oyster Aquaculture

During three Tuesdays in February 2022, oyster gardeners and enthusiasts participated in a “happy hour” series of virtual meetings organized and presented by the College of William & Mary’s Virginia Institute of Marine Science (VIMS) and Virginia Sea Grant. The series’ topic -- *Oyster*

Aquaculture – had as its goal to “broaden your oyster horizons, whether you’re a seasoned Master Oyster Gardener (MOG), a newbie, or an oyster enthusiast” according to Karen Hudson, Science Advisor and VIMS liaison to the Tidewater Oyster Gardeners Association (TOGA). Working with Hudson in organizing and hosting the Zoom meetings was Celia Cackowski, Marine Education Specialist with VIMS. Held virtually, the roughly 60-minute sessions were scheduled for the evenings of February 8, 15, and 22.

The first session in the “Happy Hour” virtual series – so named since each was to be a short informal talk about oyster aquaculture – was held February 8, and attracted a Zoom audience of 52 attendees. The featured speakers were Dr. Emily Rivest, Assistant Professor at William & Mary’s VIMS in Gloucester Point, Virginia, and Annie Schatz, a graduate assistant in the Biological Sciences Department. They focused on monitoring water quality, emphasizing how increased acidification was affecting the Chesapeake Bay, its creeks and rivers. Participants were shown how the Bay community, particularly faculty colleagues, college and high school students, and TOGA enthusiasts, became involved with community science research.



Annie Schatz, a graduate research assistant at the Virginia Institute of Marine Science, spoke of her research which involved the help of TOGA members in Virginia’s middle peninsula. Her advisor and co-presenter for this first seminar was Dr. Emily Rivest, Assistant Professor of Biological Sciences at VIMS.

On February 15, in keeping with the informality of a *Happy Hour*, the 60 attendees were treated to Celia’s Cacowski’s recipe for “The Briny Mary” (virtually, not actually), thus easing into this night’s

Lecture Series for Oyster Gardeners and Enthusiasts

Please have your cell phone handy to participate in polls throughout the presentation. Go to [Menti.com](https://www.menti.com) and enter the code below:
4065 8684



Happy Hour Recipe
The Bitty Mary
Prepare a Bitty Mary in your preferred format using the layer of one or two freshly shucked oysters. Use oyster shell or a bowl with oysters and garnish with a mixture of crushed oysters or crushed shells of oysters. This recipe can also be prepared as a "shot."



traditional vodka soda made with oyster-shell infused vodka (domestic), club soda, and a citrus twist. For a refreshing variation, try garnishing with cucumbers instead of lemon or lime.”

Lecture Series for Oyster Gardeners and Enthusiasts

Please have your cell phone handy to participate in polls throughout the presentation. Go to [Menti.com](https://www.menti.com) and enter the code below:
3238 739



Happy Hour Recipe
Carnegie Soda
This cocktail is a traditional vodka soda made using oyster-shell infused vodka, club soda, and a citrus twist. For a refreshing variation, try garnishing with cucumbers instead of lemon or lime.



topic “Forecasting Water Quality in the Chesapeake Bay.”

Dr. Marjy Friedrichs, Research Professor at VIMS, and her doctoral student Fei Da spoke of forecasting water quality in the Bay and how research tools, such as the [Chesapeake Bay Environmental Forecasting System \(CBEFS\)](#), are applied to determine the vulnerability of oyster aquaculture and restoration to environmental stressors. After Friedrichs surveyed short-term forecasting models for hypoxia and acidification, she asked participants, “Which environmental stressors are you most concerned about?”

Dr. Carnegie talked about “Re-thinking shellfish health management,” and urged TOGA members and other “citizen scientists” to play a role in establishing a network of observers to monitor shellfish health. Carnegie put it this way: “Most simply, mortality profiles can be established so departures from ‘normal’ can be identified to trigger investigations.”



Time for a Poll
Which environmental stressors are you most concerned about?
• Hypoxia
• Acidification
• HABs
• VIBs
Something else? → enter ideas in Chat Box!

Suggestions for improvements?
Enter ideas in chat, or email me: marjy@vims.edu



A role for oyster gardeners and other citizen scientists

- Community networks like TOGA can be leveraged to provide key passive surveillance perspectives
- Mortality profiles can be established as departures from “normal” can be identified to trigger investigations ...

Co-presenter Fei Da, followed with his talk of “multiple environmental stressors” that impact marine organisms, such as ocean acidification, and brought home the need for a science-driven and community approach in monitoring the Bay’s health. He stressed how important shared knowledge was to understanding how to maintain a healthy Bay, urging stakeholders (such as TOGA members) to share their observations about unexpected changes in their oyster gardens; noting abnormalities in growth, survival, yield, and quality; and reporting what they did if problems were observed.

When the three-session series came to a close, Karen Hudson summed up the event: “By all accounts, the series was a success. Participant feedback from the chat and emails was positive. A follow-up survey will be launched to collect additional feedback. The speakers were pleased and enjoyed this format.”

--Richard Siciliano, MOG

MASTER OYSTER GARDENERS (MOG) COURSE, May 10-June 11 2022 or TBA

The final third session, on February 22, featured Dr. Ryan Carnegie, a Research Professor at VIMS, along with graduate student Elizabeth Weatherup. They presented their investigations into Dermo disease, asking participants “if genetic variability of Dermo disease is an important consideration for regional biosecurity of shellfish seed?” Before they began, however, in keeping with the “happy hour” theme, the evening began with a recipe, courtesy of Celia Cacowski, for *Carnegie Soda*, “a cocktail of

TOGA and VIMS are again partnering to offer their highly rated Master Oyster Gardeners Course in the May-June timeframe, to be announced. Online applications can be submitted at <https://www.oystergardener.org/mog-course>, and will be accepted until April 8, 2022. Class size must meet the minimum of 15 and will be capped at 22.

Who should apply? Oyster gardeners that have been growing oysters for a minimum of 1 year who are interested in learning more about the science and techniques of oyster gardening and sharing this knowledge with other gardeners. However, all skill levels are encouraged to apply. You should be willing to commit to attending the course in its entirety and help TOGA respond to questions from gardeners at 3 TOGA events or activities. You should possess/or apply for an oyster garden permit from VMRC.

Schedule - The content will be delivered in 1-hour modules held virtually via Zoom on Tue/Thur evenings at 6:00 pm beginning May 10 and continuing through June 9, 2022. There will be two, in-person activities scheduled on a Saturday (tentatively May 14 and June 11). Course schedules may be modified based on speaker availability. Sessions will be recorded, however MOG participants are expected to have the availability to attend most, if not all, sessions as the discussions will be an important part of the course.

Purpose & Content - To provide a steady stream of highly trained volunteers who can lead the Tidewater Oyster Gardeners Association's (TOGA) education and outreach mission. There are a variety of opportunities to fit availability and interest, including newsletter or website support, assisting neighboring oyster gardeners with questions, manning TOGA booth at local events, float building, research projects, special committees, and serving on TOGA's Board.

Content consists of oyster gardening fundamentals; oyster biology and life history; oyster diseases; understanding the various "critters" that live in and around oyster gardens; and the regulatory and human health issues surrounding oyster gardening. Attendees will also get a start-to-finish look at the oyster cultivation process at the VIMS oyster hatchery.

Instruction is covered by a variety of knowledgeable experts including VIMS faculty and staff, State officials, and experienced TOGA MOG's. It's a mix of remote learning modules and hands-on learning, demonstrations, and lots of time for discussion.

Devices and float building instruction at 2020 MOG

Cost – TOGA is covering the cost of the course and materials through a grant from The Chesapeake Bay Restoration Fund (a.k.a. the License Plate Fund). Attendees are asked to pay a

modest fee to cover food and beverages for in-person sessions only.

Questions? Karen Hudson, VIMS, khudson@vims.edu, (804) 684-7742



The TOGA Speakers Bureau

Did you know that TOGA is full of people that like to talk about Oysters? Yes, we have a group of public speakers that would be glad to come to your Club, Group, or Organization and let them know 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 public speaker to talk at your upcoming event, please contact Vic Spain at vicspain@rocketmail.com or (804) 413-1020 or Doug Schaefer at subiceguy@hotmail.com or (804) 580-1456.

OYSTERS

Only Fresh Seafood



Please Help TOGA Fund the Madison Boyd Memorial Pier at Camp Kekoka



TOGA has cherished its partnership with Camp Kekoka for many years. Now we look forward to improvements allowing us to continue teaching a younger generation about the very important stewardship of the oysters in the Chesapeake Bay and its rivers.

In 2019, it became obvious that the dock used by TOGA at Camp Kekoka to manage the educational oyster reef and teaching oyster garden had to be replaced. This is necessary to add restoration oysters, spat and shell; to educate youngsters on Bay stewardship; and to facilitate research by professionals, educators, students and TOGA.

Thanks to the hard work by Ken Hammond (Board member and MOG), the building permit has been approved. We have a cost estimate and an agreement to start building in spring 2022. At <https://www.oystergardener.org/camp-kekoka> you can learn more about the pier design and the history of TOGA at Camp Kekoka.

This new pier will be named for Madison Boyd, who passed away April 12, 2020. Madison is greatly missed by TOGA and the Boys and Girls Club and Camp Kekoka folks. He began TOGA's involvement with the camp, and for five years, he spent many hours teaching young people about oysters and their importance to the Bay. His legacy

as a youth champion will be long remembered and honored.

A pivotal building block for any such endeavor by TOGA is the support of its members and the public. None of the oyster-related accomplishments to date at Camp Kekoka would have happened without the considerable time and care given by volunteers. Now we ask for that generous spirit to continue with everyone taking part in the donation drive underway to support the much-needed improvements.

Donations can be provided through PayPal (do not need a PayPal account, only credit card) on the TOGA website

<https://www.oystergardener.org/camp-kekoka>, or checks sent to TOGA at P.O. Box 2463, Gloucester, VA 23061 (with note on check that it is for the Camp Kekoka pier). In addition, we can accept donations of boats, motors or other such items. Any gift will be greatly appreciated.

Updates on this project will be in future TOGA newsletters. If you have any questions, please contact the TOGA President Emeritus for Education, Brian Wood at email: awood45858@aol.com.

-Brian Wood, MOG

TOGA Dues Increase Proposal

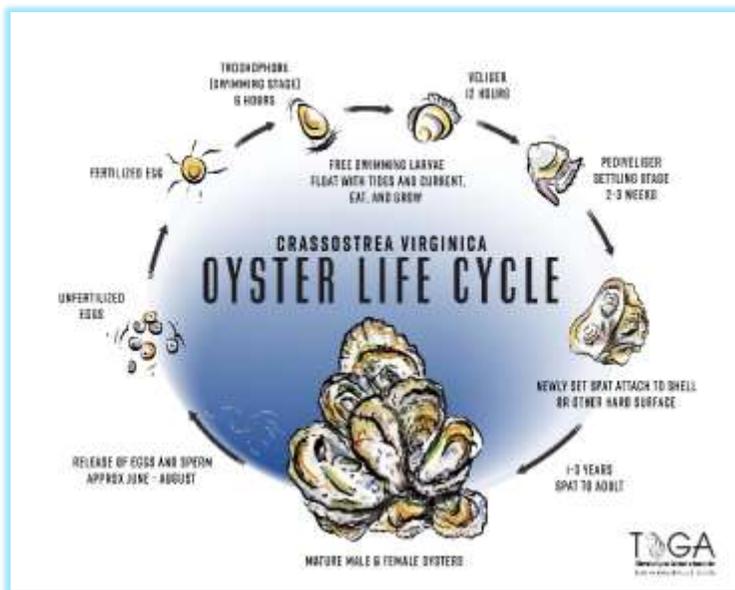
After much analysis and review the TOGA Board of Directors is going to propose raising the Annual Dues (last set in 2014) from \$15.00 to \$25.00 starting in 2023. Our organization by-laws require that dues changes be approved by the general TOGA membership. The TOGA Board will present the proposal to 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.

**MEMBERSHIP
DUES**

NEW TOGA Museum and State Park Exhibits

Over the last several months, TOGA has developed new exhibits and educational materials for several frequently visited parks and museums. These complement the existing exhibits at Williams Wharf, Deltaville Maritime Museum, and the Yorktown Watermen's Museum. Work was funded in part by a generous grant from the Commonwealth's Chesapeake Bay Restoration Act and the purchase of a Virginia Friend of the Chesapeake License Plate. We invite you to get outside and check these out!



Oyster Lifecycle- for Education and museum exhibits. This is one image from the new Virginia State Park displays. See <https://www.oystergardener.org/va-state-park-displays> for all the new state park displays.

Did You Know 2022 is TOGA's Twenty-Fifth Anniversary?

We bet you didn't know that 2022 marks 25 great years of promoting oyster gardening, education, and helping to make the Chesapeake Bay waters healthier. It's true! In 1997 Founder and First President Jackie Partin worked with Don Beard, Leslie Bowie, and Lyn Layer to set up our 501c3 not-for-profit organization.



The Virginia Institute of Marine Science and the Marine Resource Commission helped us get started with float building workshops, learning to make oyster gardens, finding vendors to work with, and conducting our first Master Oyster Gardener course on July 8-11, 1998. We applied for our first Chesapeake Bay Restoration Fund Grant (funded from the sale of VA Friend of the Chesapeake license plates) in 1999 and have been a recipient ever since. Our three-times a year Newsletter began in the spring of 2000, and our workshops, Float Sales, Oyster Fairs, Lecture series, Volunteer Recruitments, and Annual Meetings have made their places in the history books.

Thanks to our past and present Board of Directors, VIMS, our partners including **SEAGLASS** wines, Seaglass Wines, and all the members who make this possible today.

You Can Help Promote TOGA Memberships

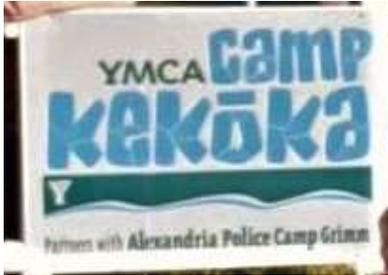
This year we are trying a new way to recruit members. You can help, it's EASY! Just download our poster from our website, <https://www.oystergardener.org/join-toga>, print it in color, and post it in your local post office, grocery store, hardware store, feed store, marina, restaurant, library, or other place. Handy tear-away tabs at the bottom



contain our website address and QR Codes in the poster can be scanned with a mobile phone camera to immediately take you to our Join TOGA page.

**Our TOGA “Fall” Oyster Float Sale event
will be held at Camp Kekoka in
Kilmarnock this year
October 1, 2022, 9am to 12:00pm**

With 2 major float sale events (Spring and Fall) occurring each year, the board of directors made



the decision to change our fall location for 2022 from Williams Wharf in Mathews to the Boys and Girls club at Camp Kekoka in Kilmarnock Va. This change will hopefully

meet the needs of both our southern and middle peninsula members with the Deltaville location and our northern and Northern Neck members with the Kilmarnock location.

As in the past, these events provide our members with the opportunity to purchase various oyster floats, oyster supplies, oyster spat, and other TOGA items such as t-shirts, hats, refractometers, as well as information from Master Oyster Gardeners on the “how to” of building oyster floats and growing oysters.

These events are also one of TOGA’s (501c3 non-profit) primary fundraising activities to benefit the TOGA/VIMS student fellowship endowment and to help rebuild the educational pier at Camp Kekoka.

--Brian Ingram, MOG

Dues for 2022

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

If it is 2021 or earlier, then 2022 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 go to <https://www.oystergardener.org/join-toga> 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.

Virginia’s No Discharge Zones on Tidal Creeks

(By Carl Zulick, in part from DEQ Website)

Many of us live on tidal creeks emptying into the bay or the rivers that feed the Chesapeake Bay.

Tidal creek waters are often shallow with low turnover and have greater need for environmental protection from vessel sewage discharges.

The EPA’s The Clean Water Act provides the



opportunity to petition to ban the discharge from boats of human sewage both treated by a marine sanitation device and untreated (or raw) sewage. Waters that receive this designation are called No Discharge Zones (NDZs). To secure this designation for a given water body, the state must demonstrate a) the need for special protection, b) the availability of alternatives to overboard discharge (i.e., pump-outs), and c) local stakeholder support. Local citizens may petition their representatives and /or the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) for an NDZ. The application process can be found at the DEQ link below.

The Virginia General Assembly passed House Bills 1774 in February 2009 and House Bill 1943 in 2011 which resolved that Virginia pursue NDZ

designation premised on the improvement of impaired tidal creeks. Only a few creeks have been designated NDZ, including the **Lynnhaven River by Virginia Beach and Broad Creek, Fishing Bay and Jackson Creek in Deltaville**

(<https://www.deq.virginia.gov/water/water-quality/implementation/no-discharge-zone-program>). But some areas are not posted and NDZ status is not well publicized, especially for boats visiting our area from far away. It is suspected that some boats are not using pump-out facilities even though most marina operators are required by law to provide for the land-based pump-out disposal of boat waste. For those of us growing oysters, this is of concern since oysters are filter feeders and the VA state water quality standard for bacteria in shellfish growing waters is more rigorous than that considered safe for swimming.

While tidal creeks are not NDZ designated, they may have been designated condemned, seasonally condemned, or condemned for a period due to a pollution event. The State samples water regularly, and bases condemnation on their findings.

Consumption of shellfish during these periods is prohibited unless they are moved for no less than 2 weeks into un-condemned waters, as shown in the linked

(<https://www.vdh.virginia.gov/ENVIRONMENTAL-HEALTH/SHELLFISH-CLOSURE-AND-SHORELINE-SURVEY-DOCUMENTS/#LOCALITYMAP>).

If you live or own waterfront in an NDZ area, The Virginia Department of Environmental Quality may look for volunteers to host a 24" x 28" sign along their shoreline to help notify boaters in these waterways that the creeks have been designated No Discharge Zones (NDZ) by the EPA. For more information, please go to the VA Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) website above or contact Anne Schlegel, Virginia Department of Environmental Quality at Anne.Schlegel@deq.virginia.gov or 804-774-9368.

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 articles for the next newsletter is August 22, 2022. 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



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!!

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: lewistm@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!



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

TOGA 2022 Spring Events

as of 8 March 2022

For entire 2022, see <https://www.oystergardener.org/schedule>

2 April 22, York River State Park Oyster Day, 10 AM to 2 PM, Event Coordinator—Vic Spain
vicspain@rocketmail.com, 9801 York River Park Rd., Williamsburg, VA 23188

8 April 22, Deadline for Master Oyster Gardener Course, see <https://www.oystergardener.org/mog-course>

9 April 22, TOGA Float Building Workshop 10:00 AM – 1:00 PM Event Coordinator—Vic Spain
vicspain@rocketmail.com, Camp Kekoka, 1083 Boys Camp Rd, Kilmarnock, VA 22482

12 April 22, TOGA Board of Directors Meeting 10:00 – 11:30 AM Deltaville Maritime Museum, 287 Jackson Creek Rd, Deltaville, VA 23043

14 April 22, Think Outside the Sink (TOTS) 10:00—1:30, Event Coordinator Sue Borra sue.borra@gmail.com, Belle Isle State Park, 1632 Belle Isle Rd, Lancaster, VA 22503

16 Apr 22 9AM – 1PM Heathsville Farmers Market Earth Day – Event Coordinator: Doug Schaefer
subiceguy@hotmail.com, Historic Rice's Hotel / Hughlett's Tavern, 73 Monument Place, Heathsville, VA 22473

23 Apr 22 9:00AM—12 Noon Middle Peninsula Spring Oyster Fair at Gwynn's Island—Coordinator: Vic Spain,
vicspain@rocketmail.com , *Gwynn's Island* Civic Center, 1996 Old Ferry Rd, Hudgins, VA 23076

23, 24 April 22 11AM-4PM (both days) Wine and Oyster Fair – Event Coordinator: Doug Schaefer,
subiceguy@hotmail.com , Good Luck Cellars, 1025 Goodluck Rd, Kilmarnock, VA 22482

24 April, 22 1:00 PM—4:00PM Williamsburg Regional Library Spring Festival—Event Coordinator: Mark Besore,
markbesore@gmail.com Williamsburg Regional Library, 515 Scotland St, Williamsburg, VA 23185

May – June 22—Master Gardener Course, see <https://www.oystergardener.org/mog-course>

?? May 22, Camp Kekoka Pier Opening and Dedication

10 May 22, TOGA Board of Directors Meeting 10:00 – 11:30 AM, Indian Creek Yacht & Country Club, 362 Club Drive, Kilmarnock, VA 22482, Commodore's Room

14 May 22, Closing order date for the 28 May 22 Deltaville Oyster Float Sales Event

17 May 22, TOGA Float Building Workshop 10:00 AM – 1:00 PM Event Coordinator—Vic Spain
vicspain@rocketmail.com , Camp Kekoka, 1083 Boys Camp Rd, Kilmarnock, VA 22482

28 May 22 Deltaville Oyster Float Sales Event 9AM-Noon, Event Coordinator: Carl Zulick, czulick@verizon.net , Deltaville Maritime Museum, "Holly Point Market Day" 287 Jackson Creek Rd., Deltaville, VA 23043

When you shop at smile.amazon.com,
Amazon donates.

[Go to smile.amazon.com](https://smile.amazon.com)

amazon
smile

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: _____

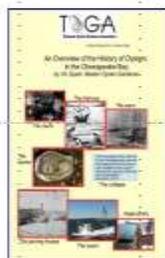
City, State, and Zip Code: _____

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)

Be a Proud TOGA Volunteer



Please fill out the TOGA volunteer form at <https://www.oystergardener.org/volunteer>. Or use the QR code with your smart phone. Tell us what you enjoy doing so we can let you know of opportunities.

Thank you!



Oyster Float Sale Order Form

Deltaville Maritime Museum, May 28, 2022

We prefer that you order floats online at <https://www.oystergardener.org/springfloatsale> . This form is an alternative to online ordering.

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

Or email to vicspain@rocketmail.com or czulick@verizon.net

Name: _____ Email: _____

Telephone: _____ Mailing Address: _____

This Order Form MUST BE RECEIVED BY MAY 14, 2022
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-designs/c2ir> for more information about the various types of Pre-Built Floats and Devices.

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

Note- Nonmembers, there will be a \$15 surcharge per device in lieu of joining TOGA. See

<https://www.oystergardener.org/join-toga>

Payment for floats and devices will be collected when you pick up your floats. Checks preferred, cash OK. No credit cards please.

Build Your Own Floats

3 Float Limit, \$10 discount per float

By participating at one or more TOGA workdays prior to this Oyster Float Workshop. The dates are Saturday April 9, 10am-1 and Tuesday May 17, 10am-1 at Camp Kekoka, 1083 Boys Camp Rd Kilmarnock VA. 22482.

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 float.

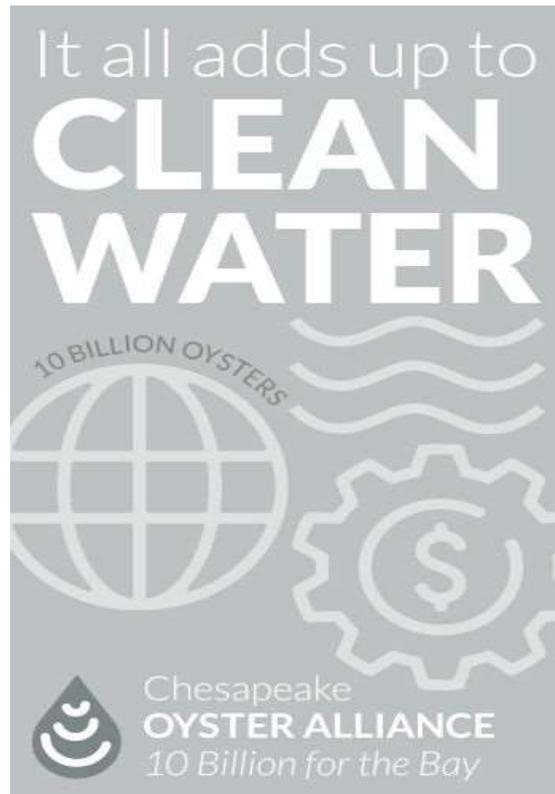
I would like _____ (quantity) Tidal Tumbler at \$50 per float.

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