



Growing oysters for a cleaner Bay.....www.oystergardener.org

WINTER

NEWSLETTER

2011

ANNUAL MEETING- January 7, 2012

The TOGA Annual Membership Meeting will be held Saturday, January 7, 2012, at McHugh Auditorium in Watermen's Hall on the VIMS Gloucester Point Campus, from 2:00 to 4:30 pm. The agenda is as follows:

Business portion: Treasurer's report and planned 2012 budget, elections for the 2012 Executive Board, a summary of 2011 and planned 2012 events, a state of TOGA summary, and a couple of awards.

Educational program: Our keynote speaker is VIMS Professor Dr. Stan Allen. His presentation, titled "Oyster Aquaculture in the Bay," describes how the traditional means of harvesting the Chesapeake Bay's oysters is undergoing a sea-change, as the industry moves from wild harvest to aquaculture. Dr. Allen explores the factors that are fueling this transition and discusses the outlook for oyster aquaculture in the Bay. Allen heads the Aquaculture Genetics & Breeding Technology Center, a leader in developing the disease-tolerant strains and grow-out techniques now being adopted by a growing number of Chesapeake Bay watermen. The second presentation is by Drs. Mike Jahncke and Dan Kauffman of the Virginia Seafood Agricultural Research and Extension Center. Food science research and Extension programs focus on safety and quality issues associated with seafood products. Last winter and spring, a sensory panel of eight people met eighteen times to train their palates and then taste oysters from seven regions of the Virginia Bay and Ocean. The work of the panel resulted in a brochure published by the Virginia Marine Products, characterizing the regional tastes. Jahncke and Kauffman will report on the work of the panel and publication of the brochure.

Light snacks and good conversation: Displays of items of interest to oyster gardeners are welcome. The TOGA Executive Board will be soliciting ideas and comments on how we can better serve our members and the community.

PROPOSED 2012 EXECUTIVE BOARD

The current Executive Board has unanimously nominated the following officers for 2012. TOGA members will be able to make additional nominations prior to the election at the Annual Meeting.

President.....Dave Turney Vice President.....Brian Wood
Secretary.....Charles Yarbrough Treasurer.....Steve Wann
At-Large Members.....Lynton Land, Ken Hammond, Rick Griffin, Amry Cox

Following are not elected

Past President.....Vic Spain* President Emerita.....Jackie Partin
VIMS Advisor.....Karen Hudson

**If President does not change.*

RETIRING BOARD MEMBER

Thank you, Kathy Hoffman, for your outstanding work as an Executive Board member for 2010 and 2011. Kathy has been our Secretary for the last two years, travelling from Callao to Gloucester Point. Kathy is a graduate of the 1999 Master Oyster Gardener class. Fortunately, she will continue to help with outreach events... closer to home.

HUSBANDRY OF NATURAL BROOD STOCK OYSTERS TO HELP THE POPULATION IN LOCAL WATERS (ABSTRACT)

Producing enough shell by Natural population of oysters is essential for their continued existence in Bay waters. It is important the Natural oyster population be sustained for the ecological services this keystone animal provides for other beneficial marine life.

However, whether or not Naturals can continue to produce enough shell to support a self-sustained oyster population in bay waters remains problematic. Husbandry of a competent group of Natural brood stock oysters kept clustered in protective enclosures to increase spawning success can help the population in local waters.

Several ways to get started are described in the full article at the TOGA web site, www.oystergardener.org. (Julian Cox, MOG'99)

EVERYTHING OLD IS NEW AGAIN

I'd like to thank TOGA for allowing me to write this follow up to the article "Growout 2mm Oyster Seed" in this Fall's newsletter. I have been involved with oyster aquaculture as both a grower and distributor for almost 30 yrs [1984-?] During that time I have made it a point to never discourage anyone from experimenting with new or different ways to grow oysters. Experience has taught me that so much can be learned from observing then tweaking a failed experiment. On the other hand there may be times when re-inventing the wheel may not be the best approach.

For as long as I have been involved in aquaculture there has been a 1.5mm Mini Spats Bag . It was used for growing out cheaper 2mm oyster spat and clam seed. I think growing out cheaper 2mm seed is a great idea and has been for at least 30 yrs or more. The fact that this 1.5mm Mini Spat Bag has been around for so long attests to the feasibility of this cost saving approach.

The 1.5mm MSB's dimensions are 9.5 "x 36" which will allow it to hold at least 5,000 2mm spat and easily fit inside a standard growout bag. The MSB is made out of a semi rigid plastic . It is stiffer than window screen and when placed in a growout bag provides a safe environment for the spat.

I visited the web site mentioned in the Fall article and am familiar with the "commercial HDPE spat bags " referred to by the author. In fact, we used to sell them They were meant to be used as mussel seed collectors when used with a mesh insert. The bags are susceptible to crab predation, however, and so we stopped selling them.

In my experience, the mesh of the Mini Spat Bag is no more restrictive than window screen, and has other advantages: it is not susceptible to predation by crabs, and each bag costs \$3.50 and may be reused. Better still, it requires no construction, only closing off the end of the bag. (Peter Perina, Eastfields Farms)

THE TOGA FELLOWSHIP ENDOWMENT – AN APPEAL FOR DONATIONS

This summer, as many of you know, TOGA increased its commitment regarding research related to the ecological restoration of the Chesapeake Bay, which ultimately impacts oyster aquaculture. We did this by establishing a Fellowship Endowment at the Virginia Institute of Marine Science (VIMS). We are pleased to continue our partnership with VIMS, the nation's largest marine science center focused on coastal and estuarine science.

We provided an initial gift of \$27,000 towards the minimum \$50,000 required to start a named endowment and have received donations of approximately \$7,000 to date. Our current goal is to raise the balance of \$16,000 by the end of this year. We need your help to reach this goal. All donations are tax deductible and will be acknowledged, in writing, by the VIMS Foundation and by TOGA in our newsletter starting in Spring 2012. For donations of \$500 or more, you will be acknowledged on our website.

If you are over 70 ½, you may wish to consider an IRA Charitable Rollover, as it has been extended for the tax year 2011. This means people who are required to take minimum required distributions (MRD) have a method of giving funds from their IRAs without incurring a taxable transfer. For more information on how to maximize tax deductions, talk to your tax advisor or to the VIMS Giving Department.

Donations can be either on-line (www.oystergardener.org) or by mail. Questions may also be addressed to Ken Hammond, 804-453-5060, kenhammond@access4less.net, TOGA Fundraising Chairman.

On behalf of the Executive Board of TOGA and the VIMS Foundation, thank you for your consideration of our request.

SECOND ANNUAL TOGA VIRGINIA HALF-SHELL TASTING

The second annual TOGA Virginia Half-Shell Tasting Saturday, November 12, was at least twice as successful as the inaugural event last year. It was the perfect fall afternoon as over 200 oyster enthusiasts tasted oysters, talked about oysters, watched oyster-shucking demonstrations by the world famous local oyster shucker Deborah Pratt and listened to Dr. Dan Kauffman explain how to taste an oyster.



Over 161 tickets had been sold as of November 9th. Many ticket buyers were people who enjoyed last year's event and chose to return again this year – that's a real mark of success when you have repeat customers. As of the newsletter deadline,

Jackie Partin, event co-Chair, is trying to determine the final ticket sales count. All signs point to a very, very successful event for TOGA and oysters. A first this year was the art glass raffle that was well received and helped to net TOGA additional funds for oyster education. Another first was the ringing of a bell for first-time oyster tasters. (Amry Cox, MOG)

Please visit www.oystergardener.org for the latest on oyster gardening.

ANNUAL FLOAT WORKSHOP- SOGGY BUT FUN

We had lousy weather on September 17 for the Float workshop down at VIMS this year: cold and rainy. But that didn't stop about 55 people – 15 volunteers and 40 builders – from coming out and building floats. This year, as in the past, we offered the standard Taylor Float and the skinny “flip float” but for the first time we displayed the new “Downunder,” similar to the popular PVC “Aussie” cage that can be suspended from a dock. Each device has specific characteristics and specific uses, depending on the location where the oysters will be growing. Vic Spain has improved our production process for the floats (and introduced the Downunder) , and Dennis Gryder has added a few details to make the Taylor floats stronger.

Our materials costs have been going up over the years, yet the price we charge for the Taylor Float kits has remained at \$75. It may be necessary to raise this price in order to make the Float Workshop worthwhile. That's a decision for the new Float Workshop Coordinators, Charles Yarbrough and Barb Shelton, who have agreed to take over from Steve Wann and run the workshop in the future. These two have worked as volunteers at the Workshops in the past and have come up with some good ideas to ensure that future Float Workshops continue to run well. (Steve Wann, MOG)

A big thanks to Steve for his dedication in leading the Annual Float Workshop for many years.

\$40 DEAL, A WIN-WIN-WIN FOR YOU, VIMS GRADUATE STUDENTS, AND THE BAY

TOGA has leftover supplies from the Float Workshop. As long as supplies last, we would be happy to build you any of the floats/cages shown in the photo on the left for \$40. These include the small flip float (left lower), the large flip float (right lower), and the new Downunder (top). For those who build their own floats, we are also offering (for the same price) an engraved HMS Bender (right photo) to shape your wire mesh. All proceeds go to the TOGA/VIMS Student Fellowship Endowment described above. Please contact Vic Spain at 804 642-6764 or vicspain@rocketmail.com.



VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

1. Refreshment Committee. Would like a group of members to plan and provide refreshments for TOGA-sponsored events. This would start with the upcoming Annual Meeting on Jan 7. Please call Nina Turney at 804-462-3131.
2. Send out bills. The main bill is for membership renewal. Each year a reminder notice needs to be sent to many of our 500 plus active members. Jackie Partin maintains the spreadsheet on who needs to pay and who has paid. Jackie will continue to collect the annual dues and keep the spreadsheet up-to-date, but she would like help addressing and mailing the reminder notices.

3. Event Coordinators and Event Support. Some long-time TOGA Event Coordinators are retiring at the end of this year. We need new people and ideas to plan for upcoming events. See pre- and post-event checklists on our website for helping plan our participation. The list of annual events now includes the email and phone of the event coordinator. Please call the coordinator if you can help set up or staff the TOGA booth. Please call or email Mike Sanders, Outreach Coordinator, if you can help or have any questions @804-529-5928; or sndrsmich@gmail.com.
4. A more comprehensive list of volunteer opportunities is periodically updated and put on our website.

TENTATIVE 2012 TOGA OUTREACH SCHEDULE

No.	Event	Date	Location	Coordinator
1	Middle Peninsula Oyster Fair*	Apr	Christchurch Sch	Vic Spain
2	Northern Neck Oyster Fair*	Apr	Kilmarnock	Lynton Land
3	MOG Refresher*	Jun	VIMS	Karen Hudson
4	Rivafest	Jun	Tappahannock	Brian Wood
5	Gywnns Island Festival	tbd	Mathews	tbd
6	Mathews Market Days	Sep	Mathews	tbd
7	Hampton Bay Days	Sep	Hampton	Julian Cox
8	Oyster Gardening Workshop*	Sep	Reedville	Brian Wood
9	TOGA Float Workshop*	Sep	Gloucester	Charles Yarbrough
10	NN Land Conservancy (BBB)	Sep	tbd	Nick Ferriter
11	Stratford Hall Trade Fair	Sep	Stratford	Mike Todd
12	West Point Crab Carnival	Oct	West Point	Bob Buckner
13	Urbanna Oyster Festival	Nov	Urbanna	Mike Sanders
14	Garden Club of Virginia	Nov	William & Mary	Curt Bluefeld
15	Chesapeake Bay Days	Nov	Mathews 6th gr	Dave Turney
16	Oyster Tasting (3rd annual)	Nov 10	Gloucester	Amry Cox
17	TOGA Annual Meeting*	Jan 2013	VIMS	Dave Turney

*Major TOGA-sponsored event

This list will likely increase significantly before year's end.

Please note: We have a new Outreach Coordinator, Mike Sanders. Mike was a graduate of the 2011 Master Oyster Gardeners (MOG) course. This class has been exceptionally active and generous in giving back to TOGA and the community. Many thanks, Mike.

TOGA IS ON FACEBOOK

If you are on Facebook, be sure to visit and "Like" our new Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Tidewater-Oyster-Gardeners-Association-TOGA/273596025993395>). Please add pictures of your oyster garden or TOGA-related activities and/or provide information about oyster gardening.

	<p>Our newsletter was paid for by funds generated from the sale of Chesapeake Bay license plates.</p>
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TOGA
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