



Growing oysters for a cleaner Bay

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

Winter 2022

Announcing The Annual TOGA Membership Meeting: Saturday, January 21, 2023, at VIMS

~ Doug Schaefer, TOGA President and Karen Hudson, Shellfish Aquaculture Extension Specialist, Marine Advisory Program, VIMS

TOGA's Annual Meeting will take place live and in person (with an online option) at Virginia Institute of Marine Science (VIMS), Gloucester Point, Virginia. To facilitate the process, you may pre-register for the event beforehand and will gain access to some of the materials that would ordinarily be handed out on the meeting day. The meeting will include two main sections: TOGA's business meeting, and the educational content. The business meeting component consists of the TOGA Treasurer's report, the Annual Event Roundup, 2023 Goals, and the Election of Officers. The educational portion will feature TOGA endowment recipient Matthew LaGanke.



Click the link above to Pre-register for the TOGA Annual Meeting

Or, copy and paste the following link into your Internet browser:

<https://forms.office.com/r/yUdf1GPw8G>

For those interested in touring VIMS's new [Acuff Center for Aquaculture](#), we will try to arrange a short tour immediately before the start of the meeting. Indicate your preference when you pre-register online.

All are welcome: Membership is not required to attend. Although non-members are welcome, we ask you to wear a name tag (provided). Membership dues will be accepted at the event.

Meeting Agenda

1:00-2:00 p.m. Check-in, meet with agency representatives (VMRC and VDH), and informal Q&A with Master Oyster Gardeners.

1:30-2:00 p.m. TOGA's Middle School Writing Contest winners. Readings of the winning essays, followed by presentations to the winners and their parents or guardians.

2:00-2:15 p.m. BREAK with light refreshments

2:15-3:00 p.m. TOGA Business

3:00-3:40 p.m. Keynote speaker (*TBA*)

3:40-3:50 p.m. Matthew LaGanke, Ph.D. student, recipient of the TOGA/VIMS endowment

4:00 p.m. **Pot Luck:** Bring something to share: dessert, side dish, oyster stew, oyster tacos, chips, cheese, crackers, etc. (Be creative)

During the TOGA Business meeting, the following issues will be addressed:

Proposal for Bylaws Changes to be presented at the TOGA Annual Meeting for vote by members:

By-Laws Change #1

Current:

Section 4. The Executive Board shall consist of the elected officers of the Association, the Past President of the Association, the President Emeritus, the President Emeritus/Engineer, the President Emeritus/Education, the President Emeritus/Youth Participation, and six members -at-large. All of these positions will have full voting privileges.

Proposed:

Section 4. The Executive Board shall consist of up to 20 directors, including the President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, and Past President. All directors will have full voting privileges.

By-Laws Change #2

Current:

Section 1. Office and Term of Office

- c. President Emeritus or Director Emeritus status may be bestowed on past or present presidents or directors who have given above and beyond normal expectations to the organization. Such status is proposed by the Board and an individual can be elected to such a position at the annual membership meeting. Once elected, these individuals maintain voting rights on the Board for life.

Proposed:

Section 1. Office and Term of Office

Eliminate item c. on President Emeritus or Director Emeritus status from the By-Laws. This should be revised and become part of the TOGA's Policies and Procedures.

Rationale:

President Emeritus or Director Emeritus status may be bestowed on past or present presidents or directors who have gone above and beyond normal expectations to the organization. Emeritus status is voted by the Board of Directors. In addition, the Nominating Committee will give preference for TOGA Emeritus members to be invited to be on the Board of Directors slate of candidates that is elected annually. When nominated by the Board to the slate and elected by membership, emeritus directors will have voting rights on the Board.

Proposal for Dues increase for member vote on at the Annual Meeting:

It is recommended that the TOGA annual membership dues be increased to \$25.00

Rationale for Dues Increase:

After reviewing current and future financial needs of the organization, the TOGA Board of Directors is proposing raising the Annual Membership Dues (last set in 2014) from \$15.00 to \$25.00 starting in 2023. This dues increase will help to accommodate increased costs such as increase in prices for printing of newsletters and materials, postage, website upgrades, and more. In addition, it will assure that we can continue to provide outstanding programs and services to you.

Slate of TOGA Board of Director Candidates for 2023:

- President: Sue Borra
- Vice President: Mark Besore
- Secretary: Carl Zulick
- Treasurer: Brian Ingram
- Past President: Doug Schaefer

Directors at Large:

- Lou Castagnola
- Ken Hammond
- Russell Mait
- Carlton McFaden
- Richard Siciliano
- Terry Lewis, President Emeritus
- Mike Sanders, President Emeritus
- Vic Spain, President Emeritus
- Brian Wood, President Emeritus



The TOGA/VIMS Fellowship Awarded to Matt LaGanke

~Susan R. Maples, Director of Development, Virginia Institute of Marine Science, William & Mary

The Tidewater Oyster Gardeners (TOGA) Fellowship, established to support students researching shellfish and Chesapeake Bay ecological restoration at William & Mary's School of Marine Science at the Virginia Institute of Marine Science (VIMS), is providing support for M.S. student Matt LaGanke. Focusing on applied research in shellfish aquaculture, LaGanke's work centers on improving production, increasing efficiency, and sharing knowledge about the benefits of shellfish farming and the services it provides. As of September 30th, the book value of the TOGA Fellowship Endowment was

\$189,962.12, and the market value was \$168,692.82. To contribute to this fund, contact VIMS Director of Development Susan Maples at 804-684-7846 or susan@vims.edu



Introducing the 2020 Recipient of the TOGA/VIMS Student Fellowship Endowment: Matt LaGanke

Hello TOGA members. Thank you so much for selecting me for the TOGA Fellowship. I'm incredibly honored to receive this amazing financial support to continue learning at VIMS.



My passion for the marine world dates back to my childhood, rooted in fond memories of snorkeling with my grandfather along the beaches of Cape Cod, Massachusetts. Drifting over shallow seagrass habitat while tightly holding on to his hand, we'd collect a diverse assortment of mesmerizing invertebrates – horseshoe crabs, surf clams, whelks, urchins, crabs – to bring back to shore and curiously investigate each critter. My grandmother, a science teacher of 27 years, later gifted me an open-water SCUBA certification to continue exploring the marine world, but from a perspective below the waterline. I graduated with a bachelor's degree in marine biology from the University of North Carolina Wilmington in 2015, where I was fortunate to put my certification to good use. My undergraduate diving experiences culminated in multiple incredible trips to the Great Barrier Reef while studying abroad in Australia for a semester – an unforgettable experience that I'm so thankful for.

After my undergraduate degree, my research campaign began in the benthic ecology lab at UNCW where I drew upon my childhood curiosities while examining marine invertebrates from coastal marsh ecosystems under the microscope. From this lab, I sought to incorporate my scientific and diving pursuits through a more field-focused position as an oyster biologist for two years in

Apalachicola, Florida for the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission focused on conserving the Apalachicola Bay oyster reefs. Through the lens of my scuba diving mask, I witnessed firsthand the disappearance of the Bay's oyster population. I gained a profound perspective on the decline of a wild fishery and the subsequent ecological, cultural, and economic impacts on the surrounding coastal community.

My research at VIMS focuses on helping growers manage their inventory through novel tracking systems and predicting containerized oyster growth. With the great uncertainty associated with shellfish farming, an inventory system that can provide for more proactive, instead of reactive, management could increase farm efficiency and production.

My project examines the feasibility of integrating Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) technology, an inventory tracking technology prevalent in land-based industries, to semi-automate crop management. The second part of my research investigates the predictability of oyster growth to understand how long growers should wait before splitting and thinning oysters into lower densities. As most growers will admit, leaving oysters too long is a common mistake. It often results in a chock-full bag with a higher proportion of misshapen oysters, which exhibit dichotomous growth due to position in the bag and likely higher than normal mortality. This equates to reduced operational efficiency, increased labor costs, and lower oyster value. The combination of enhancing inventory tracking and predicting oyster growth aims to provide growers with better data to make more informed decisions.

I'm currently a second year MS-Bypass student intending to complete my PhD by 2026. Thanks again for your support, and I look forward to discussing my research on January 21st. Happy holidays!

~Matt LaGanke, M.S.



Recap: Fall '22 Float Sale at Good Luck Cellars, Kilmarnock: October 15th

~ Brian Ingram

The Fall '22 oyster float sale held at Good Luck Cellars Winery in Kilmarnock was a huge success.

We appreciate everyone who came by to pick up one of the 182 floats sold. This total was more than any previous event, and will allow us to continue to fund the Oyster Science graduate science fellowship endowment we have at the Virginia Institute of Marine Science (VIMS). We had hoped to hold this event at Camp Kekoka in Kilmarnock, but scheduling just did not allow. However, the venue change turned out to be a huge success as the weather was perfect. Thanks to all our volunteer oyster float builders who assisted with construction and distribution.



Good Luck Cellars from on high

The Tidal Tumblers and Taylor Floats continue to be the most popular design choices. The new Spat Tubes with both small and medium mesh options for use in either the Tidal Tumblers or the Rough Rider configurations have proved to be a popular way to grow spat until other large wire mesh float configurations can be utilized.

We would like to give special thanks to the three oyster spat vendors Judy Ambrose of Oystermama's Bay-bies, Darryl Krolicki of Captain Toms, and Lynton Land for supporting us at this event. Without their support, oyster gardeners would not be able to "grow your own Oyster Garden." Large quantities of their spat were sold, in addition to float supplies such as mesh grow-out bags, rope, wire, refractometers, hats, and tee-shirts provided by TOGA.

Thanks also to Richard Siciliano (MOG) who was on hand to provide classes on "Orientation to Oyster Gardening" (OYS-101) as well as information on the latest techniques, regulations, and history.

As in the past, this event continues to be one of TOGA's primary fundraising activities with all proceeds benefiting TOGA 501 (C) 3 charity.

Thanks again to all who volunteered to work to make this event a success. Please remember, when you volunteer for TOGA events you are invited to the annual complimentary Volunteer Party scheduled for December 10th at Middlesex County's Freeshade Community Center, 1544 Regent Road, Syringa, VA 23169. 1PM – 4PM. Event coordinator: Terry Lewis at lewistmn@msm.com



Recap: TOGA Visits York Elementary School: October 27th

~Vic Spain (MOG) & Barb Westlund, York Elementary STEM Coach

York Elementary STEM Coach Barb Westlund invited TOGA to address five 5th grade classes, demonstrate how oysters filter the water, and discuss the importance of oysters to the Chesapeake Bay. Ms. Westlund and the teachers had already done a great job educating the students on oysters and the Bay.



The students rotated in and out through the day to observe the oysters and critters in the aquariums and to learn more about the local history of oysters (like the successful oyster harvesting by the Kiskiaki Indian Tribe where the Yorktown Naval Weapons Station now sits), the oyster life cycle, estuaries, salinity, wild versus farmed oysters, and whatever they were curious about. Because of the time of year and temperature, the oysters were very slow clearing the water.

The 5th graders (all 5 classes) were a lot of fun on Thursday. Their questions could be surprising. One student asked how oysters were made, another asked if there really was an animal inside the shell. A girl named Grace said she kept oysters in an aquarium for a year.

The students were interested in making simulated oysters. They had heard about using concrete blocks for restoration. One student sketched oyster castles. Ms. Westlund and Vic discussed having the 4th graders do a project next spring and summer capturing wild spat with oysters simulated with cement and lime. Perhaps the graduating 5th graders can help get them started.

TOGA donated aquariums, a refractometer (for measuring salinity) and various items for the school's use in the future.



Recap: TOGA Outreach at the Heathsville Farmers Market "Living History"- September 17th

~Richard Siciliano, MOG

Saturday, September 17th at the Heathsville Farmers Market was the day for a "Living History Celebration," and TOGA's education outreach tent was there for marketgoers to learn about oyster gardening and growing oysters for a cleaner Bay. Doug Schaefer (MOG) and Sandi Petty (MOG) joined Richard Siciliano (MOG) answering questions about oyster gardeners from marketgoers.



Recap: Surprise Guest at TOGA's Exhibit at Urbanna Oyster Festival's Education Day: November 3rd

~Richard Siciliano, MOG

TOGA took part in Oyster Festival Education Day on November 3, 2022, in conjunction with the Urbanna Oyster Festival scheduled for that weekend. The highlight of the event was a special guest (and surprise) presenter and longtime TOGA friend Debra Pratt, a former Virginia and world champion oyster shucker.

Education Day was 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 get an opportunity to immerse themselves in hands-on activities relevant to the community where they live.

Thanks to the volunteers who spoke to the students and showed them what oysters can do for the Bay's health. Debra Pratt showed the youngsters not only how to shuck an oyster like a professional, but also some life lessons on the importance of school, discipline, and grace. She demonstrated how to shuck the correct way – "through the lip, *not the hinge*. And then, as you move the knife from 3 o'clock to 6 o'clock, to 9 o'clock, you say 'I love you, I love you, I love you'...."



TOGA volunteers (L-R): Phil Rogers, Mike Ballato, Debra Pratt, Trip Phillips, and Richard Siciliano, Urbanna Oyster Festival's Education Day



Mike Ballato (MOG) looks on as Debra Pratt shows how to shuck an oyster in championship style.



Sandi Petty (MOG) explains the life cycle of oysters to Middle School youngsters.

The TOGA Speakers Bureau

~Brian Wood, MOG

Did you know that many TOGA members like to talk about Oysters? Oh 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 the Chesapeake Bay. Topics include oyster gardening, the history of oysters in the Bay, the Potomac River oyster wars, and oyster biology.

TOGA gets 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 annual meeting on January 21, 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 the 2023?

If you received this newsletter in the mail, please check the year next to your name on the address label. If it is 2022 or earlier, then 2023 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 (January through December), not 12 months from the date of your payment.

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 the planned web-based continuing education courses, starting with OYS-101: Orientation to Oyster Gardening.

To become a member, visit the TOGA website:

<https://www.oystergardener.org/become-a-member>, or use the form at the back 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. Please share this membership form with a friend.



Students Win Cash Prizes in TOGA's Middle School Writing Contest on "Consider the Oyster"

~Terry Lewis, MOG

TOGA is again offering Virginia Middle School students an opportunity to show off their writing skills and win substantial prizes. At the January '23 annual TOGA meeting, the winners for 2022 will be announced, and they will read aloud their winning entries and receive their awards. Parents and guardians of the winners will be invited to attend and accompany their youngsters at the awards ceremony. The competition is open to all Virginia students in grades 6, 7 and 8, and home-schooled students are welcome to enter.

Prizes in the amounts of \$500, \$250, and \$100 for first, second, and third places, respectively, are awarded 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."

The winning essays will be published on the TOGA Web site, and will be submitted for publication to other publications or web sites, including the Virginia Outdoor Writers Association website.

The deadline for submitting essays is 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*.



Recap: Volunteer Party: December 10th Another Successful Early Holiday Party

~Terry Lewis, (MOG) Past President

The 9th annual TOGA Volunteer Appreciation Party was held Saturday, December 10th, at the Freeshade Community Center near Topping, VA. TOGA members volunteered this past year in many ways to help. They built oyster floats and cages in the many float building workshops. They were on hand to answer questions posed by visitors at several market day exhibit booths and community festivals throughout the Northern Neck and Tidewater area. And they volunteered in many different ways to support TOGA in its efforts to spread the word about oyster gardening. It was fitting, therefore, that TOGA treated our valuable (and very valued) volunteers to some delicious food and great camaraderie at our annual Volunteer Party.

TOGA supplied a plentiful supply of delicious local un-shucked and shucked oysters for their enjoyment. Party goers brought the fixings for their favorite oyster dishes and brought side dishes and desserts to share, while TOGA provided soft drinks. Fortunately, Stacey was on hand to prepare some of the best fried oysters on the East coast, and she also made some delicious gluten-free fried oysters.

There was lively discussion among fellow oyster gardeners in the relaxed atmosphere of this new venue – the Freeshade Community Center in Topping.

The annual volunteer party is TOGA's way to show our appreciation to the many great volunteers who make this such a successful organization. Again, thank you all.



The "Thank You!" Party for TOGA volunteers



Vic Spain and Mike Sanders busy shucking for TOGA's volunteers

Featured Recipe: Stuffed Oysters with Spinach and Crispy Pancetta

~Vic Chapman, Professional Chef and MOG

Tapa for Four

Ingredients

- 12 fresh (Virginia) oysters, plump 40-50 gm (1.4110 oz. to 1.7637 oz) (for a [Grams to ounces converter](#), see below)
- 1 C cooked fresh spinach leaves
- Zest of 1 lemon
- 1/2 C Béchamel sauce ** (recipe below)
- 1 C sautéed pancetta pieces or bacon
- 1/2 C sautéed diced shallots
- 1/4 C sautéed chopped garlic Panko to dust
- Parmesan/Reggiano grated cheese to dust



Procedure

Set Oven to 400° F.

Shuck the fresh oysters and set aside in their oyster juices.

Prepare béchamel sauce. You are making a **roux**.

Ingredients: Flour, butter, and warm seasoned milk.

1. Heat the milk -- do not boil -- Season with salt.
2. Set aside on the stove top.
3. Take equal portions of fat (from pancetta) and milk, 8 oz. of butter (melted), and add 8 oz. of flour
4. Melt butter in a sauté pan over medium heat, add flour, and combine.
5. Cook for 5 minutes until the mixture becomes paste-like. Cook for another 5 minutes until it starts to become gritty and nutty smelling.

6. Add your warm *roux* to the warm milk. Whisk briskly until the milk starts to thicken. Your goal is to make a warm, thick, paste-like mix.
7. Add more *roux*, if necessary, until the desired thickness is achieved.
8. Add lemon zest to the béchamel sauce.



9. Cook the fresh spinach leaves. Either sauté or boil the spinach in water. If they are boiled, remove all water by pressing out squeeze out by using a towel wrapped around the spinach. There should be no excess moisture.
10. Sauté shallots and garlic until crispy, and set aside.
11. Combine the onion garlic mix with cooked spinach. Season with salt and pepper.
12. Sauté the pancetta pieces; set aside.

Layer the ingredients on top of the freshly-shucked oysters in this order:

1. Oysters
2. Spinach mix
3. Few pieces of pancetta
4. Garlic & shallot mix
5. Béchamel with lemon zest
6. Panko/Parmesan/Romano cheese



- Place the oysters on a sheet pan and roast in hot 400° F oven for 6 minutes.



ENJOY!

Featured Recipe: Oysters Italiano

~Vic Spain, MOG, President Emeritus

Many of you love clams cooked in white wine sauce served in Italian restaurants. Oyster lovers will like this dish even better.

Ingredients:

- 16 freshly shucked oysters with liquor (from your oyster garden)
- 1/2 lb. linguine
- 2 Tbsp extra virgin olive oil
- 3 cloves fresh garlic, minced or chopped
- 1/2 cup dry white wine
- 1/2 lemon
- 1 cup chopped spinach
- 1 tsp ground coriander seed
- salt, pepper to taste
- shredded Parmesan cheese

Directions:

1. Cook linguine as directed on package, removing from heat 2 minutes early and rinsing.
2. Sauté garlic briefly in olive oil.
3. Add linguine, oyster liquor, wine, and spices.
4. Simmer to reduce liquid, then add oysters, chopped spinach, and simmer until the oysters curl.
5. Add juice from lemon and serve in deep plates to hold the sauce.
6. Top with Parmesan cheese.

Serves two. Enjoy with Italian or French bread, spoon, and fork. You may also want to add butter while simmering and your favorite Italian herbs and cayenne pepper.

Grams to ounces converter.

<https://www.rapidtables.com/convert/weight/gram-to-ounce.html>



For more oyster recipes from TOGA members, go to the TOGA website:

<https://www.oystergardener.org/oyster-recipes>

Donate to TOGA before December 31st



To donate, click on the image above.

Close out the year 2022 by sending a tax-deductible donation to TOGA so that our volunteer Master Oyster Gardeners can continue to provide valuable resources to ecology-minded oyster enthusiasts. In the past year, TOGA has supplied close to 300 oyster cages, floats, and other oyster gardening gear at cost to our membership. In addition, TOGA's volunteer Master Oyster Gardeners met with and conducted educational programs to hundreds of elementary, middle, and high school students throughout the Northern Neck and Tidewater region, from Kinsale to Hampton. MOGs have conducted personal consultations with dozens of beginning oyster gardeners, free of charge, including in-person site visits to answer their questions about oyster gardening. TOGA, in its effort to meet the needs of all oyster gardeners – from novice to expert – is initiating a “hybrid” course (some live and several asynchronous online sessions) for oyster gardeners entitled OYS-101: Orientation to Oyster Gardening, slated to begin in January 2023, and to continue monthly throughout the year, all sessions free-of-charge to current TOGA members.

TOGA is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization and all donations are tax deductible. All proceeds from TOGA's float sales go towards the TOGA/VIMS Endowed Fellowship that supports graduate students who are researching shellfish and Chesapeake Bay ecological restoration at William & Mary's School of Marine Science at the Virginia Institute of Marine Science (VIMS). To donate to TOGA so the organization can fulfill its mission, we

urge you to go to the TOGA website and make your pledge before December 31, 2022:

https://www.paypal.com/donate/?cmd=_s-xclick&hosted_button_id=7CMYLUAVKLRP2&source=url



Recap: It was Standing Room Only as TOGA presented OYS-101 in Kinsale: December 3rd

~Sue Borra, MOG, TOGA Vice President

On an otherwise rainy Saturday, a team of TOGA MOGS held quite a successful OYS-101: Orientation to Oyster Gardening course presentation at the Yeocomico Club in Kinsale, Virginia. While Master Oyster Gardeners (MOGs) Sue Borra, Todd Crews, and Richard Siciliano expected about 20 to attend, more than 32 oyster enthusiasts sat (and stood) for a presentation on a new TOGA education initiative: an online orientation course due to roll out in January 2023.

We received very positive feedback from participants, with three new members joining TOGA after the session.



Master Oyster Gardener Richard Siciliano gives some tips on oyster gardening to a full house of prospective gardeners at the Slips Marina, Kinsale.



Although 20 registered for the seminar, over 30 stopped by, so it was standing room only at the Yeocomico Club in Kinsale, Virginia.



Volunteer to be a Regular TOGA Float Builder

~Vic Spain, MOG



Putting the finishing touches on a Taylor float at TOGA's worksite in Camp Kekoka, Kilmarnock.

This past year, TOGA member/volunteers built and sold over 300 floats/cages for fellow Oyster Gardeners, by far the most ever. Thanks so much to the hard-working TOGA volunteers and to all the float buyers who worked long hours to get the job done.

This effort resulted in more support for our TOGA/VIMS Fellowship Endowment and other important projects. Although a big accomplishment for us, it put a strain on the folks who were struggling to keep up with the unprecedented demand. We want to learn from the experience and plan better for 2023.

First, we plan to have a dedicated float-building class for those interested but not already confident in their float-building ability. We hope that novice float builders will sign up to take the course prior to our Build-Your-Own float days. We will put out a schedule for the class early in 2023.

Next, we ask that trained and experienced float builders become part of a regular float-building team. Not that you have to commit to every event, but that you will come when you can and perhaps build some floats at home. We already have several home builders, and we supply the tools and supplies needed. Home builds contributed a large portion of the floats sold in 2022.

If you are interested in participating in either training or the float-building team, please notify Vic Spain (vicspain@rocketmail.com) or Richard Siciliano (rjsiciliano@yahoo.com).



Inserting the trap door on a Tidal Tumbler during a TOGA float workshop.



Scenes from TOGA Outreach Events during the Fall '22



Doug Schaefer, TOGA President, explains to middle school students the ecology of the Chesapeake Bay and the oyster's role in restoring its health at the Urbanna Education Day held on November 3rd, the day before Urbanna's world-renowned oyster festival.



Mark and Lou also showed the impact oysters have on clearing water. The two aquariums had the same cloudy water when filled at 7:30 am. The only difference between the two tanks is that the one on the right had oysters and it was clear by 11 am. Both tanks had other critters for the kids to see, including shrimp, crabs, and little fish.



Recap: Guinea Jubilee, Sept. 23-24

~Mark Besore, MOG

The Guinea Jubilee, held on the Abingdon Ruritan Club grounds in Hayes, Virginia, is a festival that attracts thousands of people to celebrate and honor the way of life in the Guinea Neck. TOGA MOGs answered questions about oyster gardening and demonstrated how oysters clear the water.



(Above) MOGs Mark Besore and Lou Castagnola answering questions about oyster gardening at the Guinea Jubilee.



Trip Phillips, TOGA-MOG, demonstrates the oyster's filtering process when explaining oyster anatomy to an enthusiastic and receptive young student at the Urbanna Education Day held on November 3rd, the day before Urbanna's renowned oyster festival.

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 next newsletter is March 1, 2023. 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 members of our Board of Directors, the Virginia Institute of Marine Science (VIMS), our partners including Seaglass Wines, and all TOGA members who made 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.


Thanks to our Partners and Sponsors!


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The Chesapeake Bay Restoration Fund grants TOGA a portion of revenue generated from the sale of a Friend of the Chesapeake License Plate.




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TOGA Winter 2022 Events

(as of December 3, 2022)

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

- December 3, 2022: Christmas in Kinsale, TOGA Seminar: OYS-101: Orientation to Oyster Gardening to the Yeocomico Club, Kinsale, VA. Event coordinator: Sue Borra
- December 10, 2022: TOGA Volunteer "Thank You" Appreciation Party. Event coordinator: Terry Lewis, lewistmn@msm.com
- January 21, 2023: TOGA Annual Membership Meeting, Sponsored by the Virginia Institute of Marine Science (VIMS), 1370 Greate Road, Gloucester Point, VA 23062. For details, see the TOGA website: www.oystergardener.org/

The Last TOGA Opportunities of 2022

[Yeocomico Club](#) and TOGA are sponsoring *OYS-101: Orientation to Oyster Gardening* in Kinsale, Virginia. Join us for an introduction to an oyster gardening seminar, in conjunction with the Christmas in Kinsale Celebration

- **Location:** The Yeocomico Club at the Slips Marina, 285 Kinsale Road, Kinsale, VA 22488
- **Date:** Saturday, December 3, 2022
- **Time:** 10:30 - 11:30 AM
- Registration is free. To register, send an email: yeocomicoclub@gmail.com
- Questions? Please Contact Sue Borra at: sue.borra@gmail.com
- **For details see** <https://yeocomicoclub.com/events/december-3-2022-intro-to-oyster-gardening-101>

TOGA Volunteer Party: An Early Holiday Celebration

- **When:** December 10, 2022, from 1PM - 4PM
- Where: Freeshade Community Center, 1544 Regent Road, Syringa, VA 23169-2314
- For details, see <https://www.oystergardener.org/volunteer-party>.
- **RSVP to Terry Lewis:** lewistmn@msn.com or call 804-693-2687 by December 1.

TOGA Board of Directors Meeting

- December 13, 2022: 10:00 – 11:30 AM, Virginia Institute of Marine Science, Davis Hall Room 101, 1370 Greate Rd, Gloucester Point, VA 23062
- January 10, 2023, TOGA Board of Directors Meeting 10:00 – 11:30 AM, Indian Creek Yacht & Country Club, 362 Club Drive, Kilmarnock, VA 22482, Commodore's Room

December 15, 2022: Middle School Writing Contest Essays due. Event Coordinator: Terry Lewis, lewistmn@msm.com. Go to the TOGA Website for details: <https://www.oystergardener.org/youth-writing-competition>

TOGA Membership Annual Meeting Live and Virtual (Your Choice)

- **Where:** Virginia Institute on Marine Science (VIMS), Waterman's Hall, 1370 Greate Rd, Gloucester Point, VA 23062
- **When:** Saturday, January 21, 2023 from 1 to 4 PM.
- **More details** are posted on the TOGA website in December 2022.
- **Pre-Register Here** online to select how you would like to attend the annual meeting: in-person or virtually: <https://forms.office.com/r/yUdf1GPw8G>

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: \$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.



**PO Box 2463
Gloucester, VA 23061
Return Service Requested**

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T  **G A**
Tidewater Oyster Gardeners Association

Growing oysters for a cleaner Bay