

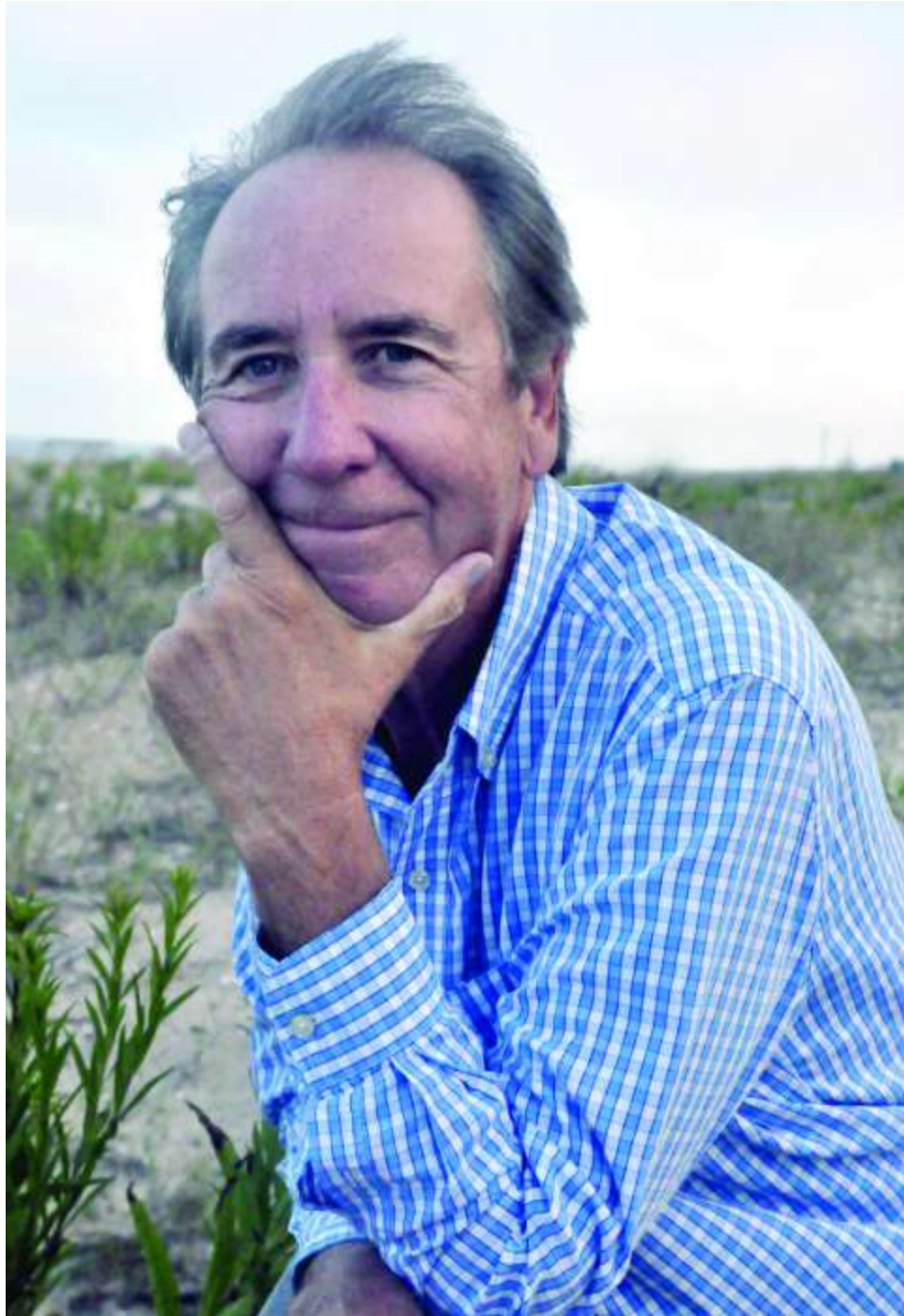
Annapolis Sailor Pens Novel "Chesapeake Bound"

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April 11, 2025

Q&A With Tom Guay, Author of "Chesapeake Bound"

You may know him as one of the Eastport Oyster Boys, a [SpinSheet](#) contributor, colonial tour guide, or community volunteer on the Severn River. Tom Guay now adds "novelist" to that list as his new book "Chesapeake Bound" (McBooks Press) recently hit the bookstores. Below he shares insights on his work:



SpinSheet columnist and Eastport Oyster Boy musician, Tom Guay, author of "Chesapeake Bound." Photo by Karen Guay

What inspired your novel?

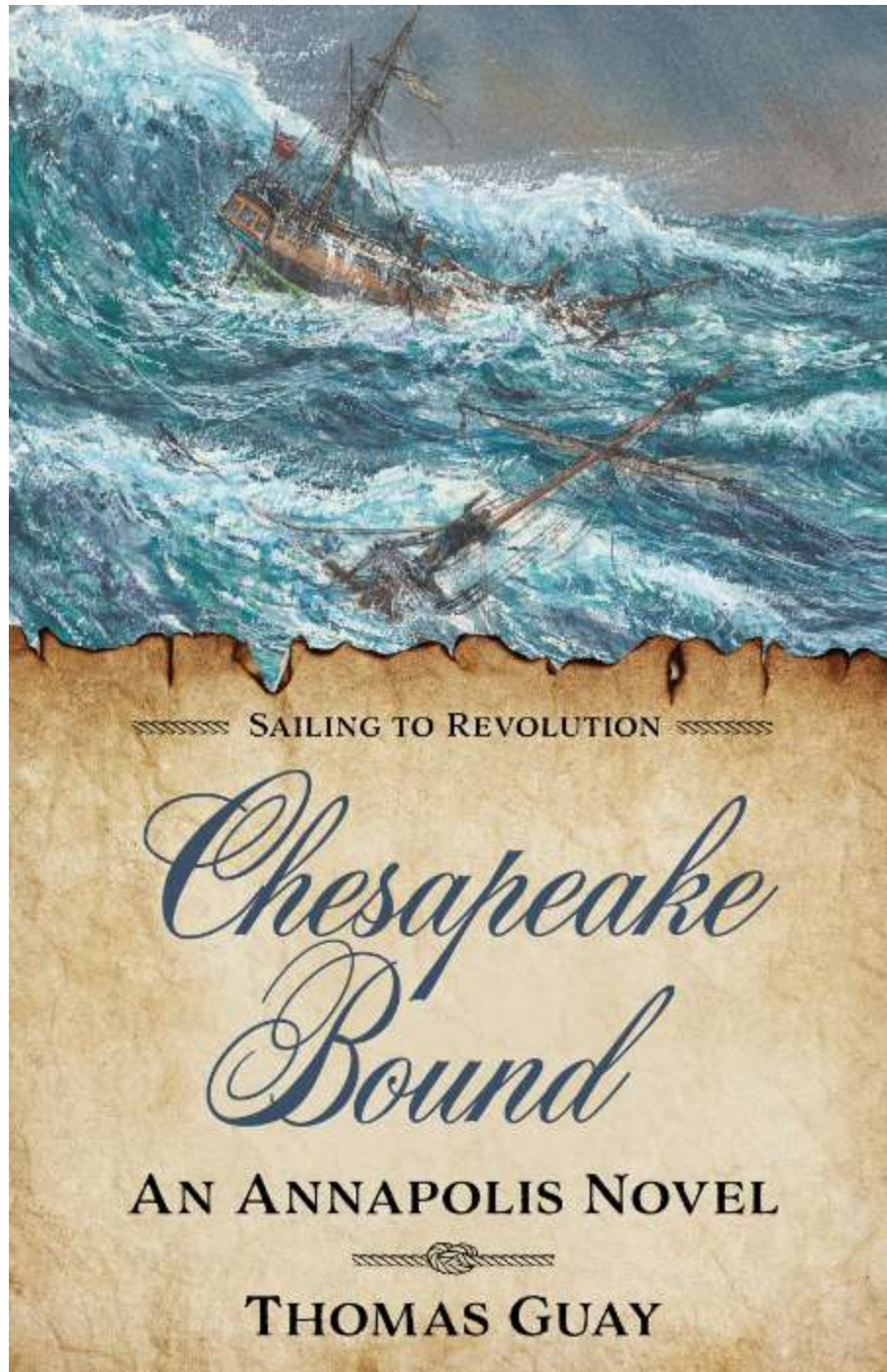
Tom: The story is about immigrants, my hero in particular, searching for a sense of belonging in the New World after feeling abandoned in the Old. Add in my love of sailing, wooden ships, and music; the 18th century was a good fit. You have to take a sailing voyage to get from there to here, so adventure is always in the wind.

Plus, I was hosting tours of the Charles Carroll House in Annapolis, which was home to Charles Carroll of Carrollton, one of four of Maryland's signers of the Declaration of Independence. That led to a deep dive into his family's history in Ireland and England's horrid treatment of the Irish Catholics.

All this led to the idea of writing about the indentured servant experience, which is how many or even most of our ancestors arrived on these shores.

What kind of research did you do?

I visited libraries, state archives, and historical societies, constantly taking notes to get a sense of what life was like in 1763-1770. Of course, I'm always reading novels, biographies, nonfiction, diaries, travel narratives, and I study paintings, maps, charts, and drawings from the era to get a realistic view into the 18th century world.



Find "Chesapeake Bound" book signings, author talks, and more at thomasguay.com.

So, there's a fiddle player in the story. Any resemblance to a certain Eastport Oyster Boy we know?

I drew on my experience as a 'musicioner' and fiddler with the O'Boys. I gave my hero, Michael, abilities way beyond my own to have a bit of fun. Performing as a musicianer has given me access to social and political events that I would not ordinarily have attended. So, I

pondered how my hero could weave his way into the homes of colonial aristocrats like Carroll, William Paca, or George Washington to share political, business, and social intel and create opportunities for adventure.

Tell us about your writing process.

It took forever... getting started was and still is the hardest part. I have to thank my wife, Karen, for dropping me off at St. John's College where I'd write in the McDowell Hall coffee shop. Later, I shared office space at the Annapolis Green HQ on Maryland Avenue. My writing days were usually for four- or five-hour sessions. That's a good day's writing. Somedays, I'd only get a few hundred words down, other days a few thousand words or even a couple of chapters. I had an overall story arc planned out, but once you get to work writing, the Muses would start whispering ideas in my ear. I follow their clues and find ways to make them fit into the story. At times, I'd have to put the writing aside, put on my research hat to study up on ideas, and return to writing.

How do SpinSheet readers find your book?

Visit a local bookstore: Old Fox Books in Annapolis, Park Books in Severna Park, The Bookplate in Chestertown, BrowseAboutBooks in Rehoboth, and Bethany Beach Books in Bethany Beach. It's also available from Barnes & Nobel stores. As I'm a debut novelist, it's best to call ahead so that stores can stock the book. It's also available online. Find book signings, author talks, and more at thomasguay.com.