

SKIPJACK COMMUNITY NEWS

PROVIDING INFORMATION TO THE COMMUNITIES OF
WENONA, DEAL ISLAND, CHANCE, AND DAMES QUARTER

In this Issue...

Culture Corner	Fire Dept Awards	Cooking with Feature	Community Announcements	Lions Club News	Calendar of Events
1	6	6	7-12	8	12

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CULTURE CORNER

DICKY WEBSTER

BY: GLORIA HORNER

our willingness to commit to members of the community.

Dicky Webster: Portrait of a Skipjack Captain

If you want to know what defines a community; what it values, how it functions, what will be its future, then seek out its members. Listen to the memories of their lives and within their story you will find what characterizes a community, the morals it exemplifies, what it defines as good, and seeks to achieve. Each story told by an individual member becomes the filament which illuminates their lives and ultimately creates the spark of our society. As we interact, intersect, and intertwine with each other within the era and larger events of the world, the single thread of each person is laid in the weft and woof, ultimately binding us together. Our societal fabric is created by individuals and thus we are only as strong as what each person brings to the community. The Deal Island area is blessed with such a tightly knit community that has flourished for so long because of its members. We thrive because they strive, each of us are forged within our families and



Listening to Richard “Dicky” Webster, it is easy to see how men like him continue to create the fabric of the society forged by the first settlers. When asked about his life, he defines himself as a Skipjack Captain, a son, a family man, and someone who worked. And for Dicky, working on the water began as a child of ten, going crabbing with his father. One of eight children from Captain Clifton and Elizabeth Webster, growing up in the 1940s on a tightly bonded community island, children experienced a brief childhood. Following the footsteps of his father was the cultural norm and

learning a complex craft requires a waterman to begin his apprenticeship early in life. The chores assigned seem little more than to ease the work of the father. However, by observing, listening, and performing a range of minor tasks, though each seemingly unrelated, a gradual understanding of how to follow the water becomes second nature. So instilled, like learning language, a waterman builds his skills through time, with subtle training, and by the guidance of a master. The smallest of lessons, often a casual word or explanation, a reference to something, a curt admonishment, or simple praise compounds into understanding how to make a living and in an environment that can be deadly for the inept. Listening to Dicky one realizes that the skill building for following the water is nothing short of developing a respect for nature, honing an acute perception, and mastering ninja reflexes, whetted with practice.



By ten Dicky was working with his father crab potting. Even as a young child his responsibility was to pilot the boat in tandem with a row of crab pots. This assignment enabled Dicky's father to snag the bobbing cork with a boat hook, haul it aboard, dump, sort the catch, bait, and throw it back into the water just as the next pot came into reach. Though tedious in nature, it is a vital

contribution and so intricate, in effect two people acting as one to achieve a single goal forged into one complex and dexterous set of maneuvers. And developing the skill to maintain a set speed at just the right distance along a row of bobbing corks demands eagle eye sight, tight reflexes, and an ability to focus on the task. Even a light wind or running tide can all but obscure each cork, the only evidence of a crab pot sunk deep under the water. Eventually, a range of skills are sharpened into an uncanny ability to make a boat obey the tiniest of commands from the pilot and deftly travel an unseen track on the water. Though today Dicky confesses, this method of work was not his favorite way to make his living. By the time he was 13 he went to work at the crab house. The need for constant attention meant working 12 to 14 hours a day.

Recalling his family growing up, his father had four children from his first marriage to Annie Horner who died in childbirth, leaving four children for her husband to raise. Captain Clifton later married Elizabeth Daniels, and together they had eight children, though today, only he, a brother Ted, and sister Susie remain. But from Captain Clifton and Miss Elizabeth, their children produced 37 grandchildren, 69 great-grandchildren, and the number of great-great-grandchildren is still increasing. Early in Dicky's life, tragedy struck the family when an older brother, Walter Clifton "Poochie" died in a car accident at seventeen. From that loss, Dicky recalls how his brother's body was laid out in the room used only for very special occasions till the burial. Life and death in that era was not so clearly divided and vigiling the body at home was a common bereavement

custom in many communities. Caring for a loved one at death was a family endeavor and demonstrated the love for the deceased. As a young child unfamiliar with death, seeing his brother laid out, he would pass by expecting to see his brother moving. Understanding death, especially the tragic loss of a young man, and how we respect the dead is an important part of a person's development and a reflection of the community.

Fondly recalling Sundays at his grandparent's home, Viva Webster and Arthur Daniels. This was when all the extended family would gather for the traditional Sunday dinner. In the warm weather, with no such thing as air conditioning, food was prepared in the summer kitchen. Lots of delicious food shared with many of the family attending. In such a close knit community, these types of dinners served an important aspect of life for the community, bringing large families together to define and reinforce kinship, share a day of respect, enjoy a day of play, serve as a day of bonding, of connecting as a family. Siblings might squabble, teasing was a natural part of being part of a family, but more, such dinners were important to each member, to know who they were, their position in the family, and who 'were their people.' To an outsider observing such gatherings the impression might be one of simply gossiping, or swapping stories, or a recounting of long ago events between the members. However, through such coming together, in an era before constant and swift communication, these gatherings were how we shared our lives, defined what our relatives, friends, and acquaintances needed or were going through. And discussions of work meant valuable

information for making a living was exchanged. Weather lore, remembrances of past events, sharing how challenges were accomplished by experienced members of the community became a body of knowledge passed down to the next generation, held in readiness for the future. People learned to manage their homes, recipes exchanged, skills taught, relationships of trust and faith refined. A simple meal might include grace said before eating to reinforce faith; an order of seating and serving to show deference and respect, and compliments conveyed appreciation. The nuances of such gatherings reflect the community in miniature.



After finishing high school, Dicky went aboard a skipjack with his uncle, Captain Art Daniels and later with George Anderson. Living and working aboard a skipjack is a grueling way of life. Dredging was done where the oysters were plentiful and often that required working away from home, at a harbor up the bay. In the 1960s and 1970s this often meant leaving on Sunday afternoon for the long drive to the distant harbor and only returning the following Friday. Dredging season began the first of November and ran till the fifteenth of March. Life aboard a skipjack meant living with the other crew members, in very cramped space, in all weather conditions, eating, sleeping, and working through the week.

Such an environment hardly seems practical. Yet for over a hundred years, Chesapeake Bay watermen performed this type of work. But from this tradition of working, a man learned the subtleties of earning a living, the value of work, the importance of how to keep your crew safe, and how to lead. A captain is more than just the owner, rather he holds the livelihood and often the lives of his crew with his understanding of the environment and mastery of a complex set of sailing skills. Knowing where to work, how to navigate around the other skipjacks, and a keen awareness of the capriciousness of the weather are necessary to success and safety.



After working for captains, Dicky obtained his own boat for working on the water. Then in 1971 Dicky bought a skipjack, the Caleb W. Jones. Named for its original owner, a Smith Island waterman, she was built in 1953 by the Rice brothers, at a commercial boatyard in Reedville, Va. The Caleb W. Jones is one of the last skipjacks ever built. She first was used to harvest oysters, later bought to become a pleasure craft, but returned to her original purpose when Dicky purchased her. Being a captain of his own skipjack represented the epitome of following the water, what Dicky most loves. He learned how to be a captain from the other men who shared their knowledge of

the bay, taught him how to guide a skipjack, and he honed his skills by practice till it became second nature. When the market is good, and the weather fair, little can compare to working under sail. Charting the course to the oyster reefs, tacking with a dozen or more other boats each steering around a moving obstacle course, watching the dredges hauled aboard filled with the delicacies which provide for the livelihood of each member, and receiving a fair price for the arduous work provides a satisfaction few people who do not work on the bay can understand. Yet, every day on the water holds not only promise but an opportunity to experience the challenge of life and death. The Chesapeake Bay is an amazing patch of the natural world, a picture postcard of nature in all its beauty, and somewhere just under the surface is the bounty of resources watermen seek. It is the quest for that seafood which drives the waterman out to work. Being captain of a skipjack requires far more skill for a man than just the knowledge of where to harvest across the bay. Learning where is easy. But the leadership to direct the crew to perform the complex sequence of maneuvers required to navigate across an oyster bed or the precision to dock the boat, those skills are far more challenging to acquire.

However, the Bay is a capricious mistress and some days Mother Nature demonstrates not only her beauty but her formidable power. One episode Dicky remembers with clarity for the violence of the wind and potential danger to the boat and the crew. A rogue storm arose with little warning packing winds of 100 miles per hour. Understanding the need to reach the harbor, Dicky began the formidable task of commanding a skipjack laden with 150

bushels and his crew to the safety of the harbor. While graceful in light winds and able to withstand substantial gusts, a raging storm challenges every captain. Outrunning is the safest strategy, but often not possible. Captaining the skipjack into the harbor Dicky held the life and safety of his crew and boat in his hands. Watching he saw another captain cut his yawl boat to lighten the load for a better chance against the storm.

Finally reaching the harbor, Dicky discovered half of the catch had washed overboard and one crew member, so traumatized by the experience, immediately quit. But, regardless of the danger, there is a certain pride in being tested by Mother Nature and surviving to sail another day. In spite of the potential danger, Captains, the good ones, are risk takers, but not gamblers. Even after that storm, Dicky continued to dredge. Working up the bay on the Western Shore meant spending the work week living away from home. However, when prolific oyster beds were located close enough to harbor in Cambridge, he could come home after work each day. Life following the water is lived in a constant state of flux.

Eventually Dicky accepted an alternative future. The reduced catch limits, increased costs to maintain a skipjack, and finding a crew all took a toll on his ability to make a living and Dicky sold the Caleb W. Jones. Dicky eventually began to take out fishing parties. Still every day working on the water is determined by the weather. Fair weather or foul, a good catch or low market, life as a waterman means accepting those things

you cannot change, but always going forward, always willing to work, and always adapting to what the day brings. There is a rhythm tied to the water, to the weather, to natural cycles that watermen have faced for generations. Yet they refuse to abandon this livelihood, understanding that tomorrow always brings another opportunity. Resilience and a pragmatic regard of life, the acceptance of waiting for the next opportunity to go forth and work another day. For a waterman, work is a novel written with a slow hand, not a short story scribbled at the end of each day. And for most captains on the Chesapeake Bay, daily work is a rite of worship. Sitting with Dicky and his wife Claudia in his lovely home, one might assume most men at his age would be enjoying retirement, but for Dicky, he continues to see his future with work. This from a captain who has already been aboard boats for 71 years, yet still Dicky looks forward to working for a couple more years.



**FIRE DEPARTMENT ANNUAL AWARDS
BANQUET**

On March 18, 2023, the Deal Island-Chance Volunteer Fire Company held their annual awards banquet for 2022. The following awards were presented:

- Perfect Attendance- Danny Ray Webster
- Top 2 Fire Call Responders- Danny Ray Webster (19), George Mister, Jr. (11)
- Top 2 EMS Call Responders- Suekay Ford (15), Tracy Horner (7)
- Top 2 Watercraft Rescue Responder- Danny Ray Webster (18), David Webster (10)
- Top Responder Award- Bob Illingsworth
- Administrative Award- Darlene Bozman
- Firefighter of the year- Danny Ray Webster
- Service Awards- Shane Abbott 1 year, Ray Ford 35 years



In a medium pot, add lima beans. Cover with 2 1/2 quarts of water (continue to add water as needed). Add salt and pepper to taste. Bring to a boil. Let boil for 5 minutes uncovered. Add ham pieces and corn. Let cook 5-10 minutes, or until lima beans are tender. Cut the refrigerated biscuits into pieces. Add the biscuit pieces (dumplings) and cook 5 minutes, then turn off heat. Let sit 10-15 minutes, then serve. Make sure you stir so the dumplings don't stick.

Background:

The story of how a person "finds" Deal Island is always an interesting one. In Wanda Hill's case, it was a man. Born in Berlin, Wanda and her first husband stayed close and raised their five children in Libertytown. After many years together, Wanda became a widow. A few years later she crossed paths with David Hill and "found" Deal Island. Wanda gained a reputation as a great housekeeper and began cleaning for several local families while her husband, David worked as a mate with Dicky Webster. Though now retired, Wanda frequently still gives some elderly members of our community a helping hand. Wanda has given herself to the community since her arrival. She loves to volunteer and help with multiple organizations and events held in our area. Her love for Deal Island has transferred to three of her five children (Sue, Denise & Holland), who also now call our community home. Not to be left behind, her sister Ann has also joined us as well as her very good friend, Rosemary. Wanda is one of the busiest seniors around but in her free time, she enjoys gardening, baking cakes and crocheting. She also loves to spend time with her dog, Princess. We appreciate Wanda "finding" us so many years ago and we are grateful that she continues to call our community home.



COOKING WITH...WANDA HILL

Lima Beans & Corn

- 1 lb. 8 oz. baby green lima beans
- 1 small bag (or can) white corn
- 1 Smithfield Ham Steak cut into small pieces
- 1 can refrigerated original biscuits

COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS



Free Food
Free Resources
Delivering Hope to
Our Neighbors

SHOP the TRUCK!

The Maryland Food Bank Eastern Shore's **MOBILE MARKET** is visiting!
We're inviting ALL to receive healthy foods and resources.
Hop on board and shop the truck, fresh groceries and dry goods will be offered.

MONDAY May 1st
11:00pm – 2:00pm (or until done)
Deal Island Volunteer Fire Department
10090 Deal Island Road, Deal Island MD 21821

SKIPJACK HERITAGE MUSEUM

Beginning April 1, the Skipjack Heritage Museum will resume its Spring, Summer and Fall hours, Saturday 11-3, and Sunday 12-4.

Individual showings are available by calling 443-783-5180 or the numbers posted on the entrance. As soon as it warms up, we will resume restoration on the "City of Crisfield". Anyone interested, please visit the museum and leave your name and number. She will sail again!



ART INSTRUCTORS NEEDED

The Somerset County Arts Council is bringing arts and crafts to the Deal Island Community. We are looking for local artists, crafters, or just crafty people who would like to teach a half day workshop on Saturdays from 10-1. A teaching stipend will be paid by the Arts Council. The workshop site will be Rock Creek Church Hall. Instructors have already been found for Wreath making, Sea glass Christmas trees, Painting garden statues and Cookie decorating. Please reach out to Carrie Day or email if you have ideas or would like to teach a class at

skipjackcommunitynews@gmail.com.



Ages 12 & Under
Community
Easter Egg Hunt

St. John's Church
9883 Deal Island Rd.
Bring Your Own Basket

Saturday, April 8
11:00 a.m.

For more information, please contact Carrie Day at diclions58@gmail.com or 443-614-9926.

DEAL ISLAND- CHANCE LIONS CLUB NEWS

A driver who wasn't sure where Deal Island is located. A bus that had 58 seats, then 56, then 58. A cell phone left behind in a bathroom stall. A rest stop restaurant that didn't accept cash. A minor health issue handled professionally by an onboard EMT. And a bunch of naughty ladies in the back of the bus. All small potatoes and minor nuisances to a day filled entirely with chatter, smiles, laughter, and hugs. There were a lot of first-time visitors to Kitchen Kettle, Miller's, and Sight and Sound. To see and hear how much they truly enjoyed their day was so very special. For all of you who sponsored a seat and provided an opportunity for someone to join us, THANK YOU. Thank you, Deal Island for making our very first bus trip such a wonderful day! Mark your calendars for the next bus trip to Sight and Sound for Miracle of Christmas on November 25, 2023 (New Date!).



SKIPJACK FESTIVAL HELP NEEDED

Planning for the 2023 Skipjack Festival has started. The festival will be held on Sunday, Sept. 3- Monday, Sept. 4. We are actively looking for volunteers to be the Chair (lead) of the following areas: Festival Coordinator, Hot Dog Stand, and Silent Auction. Outgoing chairs will be available to advise. If interested, please reach out!

SKIPJACK RUN 10TH ANNIVERSARY

September 9, 2023 7:30am 5K or 10K. Online registration: <https://runsignup.com/Race/MD/DealIsland/SkipjackRunDealIsland>

Professional Chip timing by TCR Event Management. 100% of proceeds support Deal Island Community Thanksgiving Dinner on Thanksgiving Day. Awesome refreshments (got chocolate milk?) Raffles & Unique trophies. Race day registration. Simultaneous start for 5K and 10K. Overall Male + Female / Masters Male + Female (over 40) / Age Groups (Male + Female). Long Sleeve Cotton feel Tech Tee - first 100 registrations. Multiple Water Stops. Walkers, jogging Strollers & Well-mannered Canines with leashes welcome. No rain date or refunds. EMT assistance available. See you there!



FAREWELL TO ARBY'S

After almost 40 years, sadly Arby's general store and bar and grill will be closing. There will be a Retirement Sendoff Party for all to celebrate. Saturday, April 29, 6 pm and/or bring a dish to share on Sunday, April 30, 2 pm.



Please Join Us for Senior



No Pre-Sale ♦ Purchase Entry at the Door

Seniors (60+) ↔ \$5 To Play*

Saturday, April 15, 2023

Deal Island-Chance Fire Department

Doors Open at 4:00 p.m. - Games Begin at 5:00 p.m.

*\$5 entry includes:
6 Bingo Cards for each game,
1 Bingo Card for each special game,
1 Dabber and a Chance
to win some awesome prizes!



--20 Regular Games
--2 Special Games
--50/50

Concessions Will Be Available

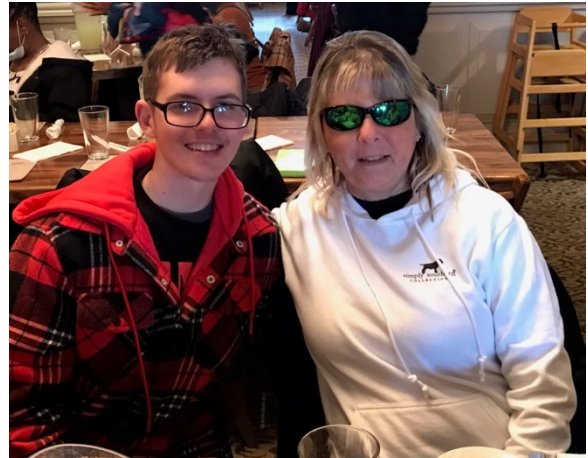
Any questions or to volunteer, please contact Carrie Day at 443-614-9926 or email DICLIONS58@GMAIL.COM

While the Deal Island-Chance Lions Club is providing the primary bingo prize pool, we are looking for donations of door prizes and tie-breaker prizes. If you plan to donate, please give your donation to Carrie Day before April 8. We are also looking for donations of desserts for the concession stand, e.g. lemon bars, rice krispy treats, cookies, etc.

Volunteers are also needed for the door, for the kitchen and for the floor. Let us know if you would like to help!

MORE PICTURES FROM SIGHT AND SOUND TRIP








SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION

The Deal Island-Chance Lions Club is currently accepting applications for up to three \$500 scholarships. Applicants must be a graduating senior with plans to attend a post-secondary college/university, a trade school, or a specialized vocational program. Applicants must live in Wenona, Deal Island, Chance, or Dames Quarter (21821 zipcode). Please send any questions to diclions58@gmail.com. Applications are due no later than Friday, April 21, 2023.



WANT TO PLAY PICKLEBALL?!

No experience needed! Easy to learn and play!
If you're between 18 and 100 yrs old,
interested in more information,
Send email to DIPickleBall784@gmail.com

Happy People Play Pickleball!
Deal Island Elementary Tennis Courts

Made with PosterMyWall.com
Getty Stock



Deal Island Elementary School is actively looking for Reading Buddies to participate in the Read to Succeed program.

A "Reading Buddy" meets one day a week for 30 minutes with a child who reads a book to you to help them improve their reading skills and reach their appropriate reading level. As you can imagine after Covid, there is a need for help!

If you are interested in participating, please contact :

Lois Hartstein
loishartstein@gmail.com

or

Cathie Thomas
United Way of the Lower Eastern Shore
cathie@uwles.org



Newsletter Contributors Wanted

If you would like to write an article promoting a local event or activity OR relating to our culture or history OR share a picture, flyer, etc., please email skipjackcommunitynews@gmail.com.

Newsletter Distribution

If you would like to be added to the email distribution list for our community newsletter, please email skipjackscommunitynews@gmail.com.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

4/1, 7:30 am-2 pm	St. John's Indoor Yard Sale
4/1, 11-3	Skipjack Heritage Museum opens
4/1, 5 pm	Fire Department Virtual Quarter Auction via Facebook Live
4/8, 11 am	Easter Egg Hunt at St. John's
4/15, 5 pm	Senior Bingo at Fire Department- doors open at 4 pm
4/29, 7 am-10 am	Ladies Auxiliary Breakfast at Fire Department
4/29, 7 am-10 am	Mother's Day flowers pick up at Fire Department
4/29, 6 pm	Arby's Farewell Party
4/30, 2 pm	Arby's Farewell Potluck Party
5/1, 7:30 am-2 pm	St. John's Indoor Yard Sale
5/1, 11 am- 2 pm	Maryland Food Bank Mobile Market at Fire Department
5/8- 5/12	Teacher Appreciation Week at Deal Island School
5/27, 7 am-10 am	Ladies Auxiliary Breakfast at Fire Department
6/17, 10-1	Wreath Making Class at Rock Creek Church
7/6	Wicomico AARP trip to see Grease
8/26	Senior Carnival on Thomas Price Rd. (more info to come)
9/3-9/4	Skipjack Festival
9/9, 7:30 am	Skipjack Run 10 th Anniversary
9/10-9/16	Somerset AARP trip to Vermont
11/25 (New Date!)	Miracle of Christmas bus trip