

## Capt. Kerry's Huntin' and Fishin' Stories

*Kerry liked to hunt with his sons Todd, Chad and Bob and his best friend Norm. He started hunting with his Dad when he was 12 and never stopped. He hunted deer, and small game all over the State of Maryland and Pennsylvania.*

*After moving to Annapolis, in 1974, he got into water fowling big time with his sons and his yellow and black labs. At one time he held more than a dozen blind sites on the South River. He also hunted for ducks and geese in Arkansas, New York and Kentucky. For many years he kept up a family tradition started by his Grandfather and Dad, by hunting every Thanksgiving morning with family. Here's his story:*



**I enjoyed growing** up in Carroll County while it was still rural. We did a lot of squirrel, rabbit, pheasant, and deer hunting in the county. While still in high school, I used to squirrel hunt early in the morning before school and after school. I had the perfect place, next to a residential subdivision. I knew I could not use a shotgun because of the noise, but I could use my .22 with a homemade silencer. I simply took a baby bottle nipple, and cut a crisscross on the top and put it over the barrel. I got my limit of 6 squirrels in the morning and 6 in the evening, until my mother said “enough is enough”.



**I also purchased my first** shotgun in Carroll County. All of the guns I used were previously hand me downs from Dad and others. All were single shot 12 gauge with black tar tape (before electrical tape) on the stock to keep it together. I had saved \$25

from my paper routes. I couldn't wait to buy my first gun. My Dad took me to a sporting goods store at the new Westminster Shopping Center. (this was a long time ago) We told them we had \$25 and wanted to buy a hunting gun. They sold me a 12 gauge Mossberg with bolt action clip and adjustable choke for \$25, tax included. That was on a Friday night. The following morning I went in the woods behind the Robert Moton School before sunrise. As the Sun started to come up I saw a squirrel at 50 yards. That's a long shot for a shotgun. I adjusted the choke to full and fired as the squirrel came down the tree. I thought I saw it fall, but I wasn't sure. I slowly walked up to tree and found my game at the bottom of the tree. I still have that gun today.



**My first deer** hunt with a rifle (German 8 mm) was when I was 13 or 14. My gun was given to my Dad by my Uncle Johnny, who brought it home from the War in Europe. My Dad and I were hunting in northern Carroll County near Deep Run. It was bucks only back then. We didn't have any high tech gear such as binoculars or even a rifle scope. I had already had my hunter education class and a pretty strict lecture from my Dad, that if I ever broke the rules or shot a doe, I would get my ass beat hard. With this in mind, he placed me on small hill overlooking a field. As daylight broke, I had a pretty good field of vision over the field in front me. As it got lighter, an image of a deer in the far corner, about 150 yards away appeared. It was a makeable shot with the 8 mm. I kept waiting for the sun to come out, hoping it would brighten the deer image in the corner of the field.

I looked hard and but could not find a rack on this deer. It may have been a spike, but I couldn't be sure without a scope or field glasses. I watched that deer for nearly an half an hour. It never got closer. I knew I could kill it, but I also knew I would get an ass whipping if it was a doe. The deer finally walked back into the woods and I felt relieved at first. About 10 minutes later I head a shot in the direction that deer walked. I didn't see anymore deer that morning. My Dad picked me up at 11 am. As we were driving out, we saw a hunter hanging a deer about mile from where I was hunting. It was a spike!



**Carroll County** was where I shot my best buck. My brother Ricky had a place on Taylorsville Rd. near Warfieldsburg. He invited me on opening day. It was a cold late November morning. I was using my 30.06 for the first time. I had just traded Uncle Johnny's 8 mm. for the 30.06. I was told later the 8 mm was a collector's item, but I liked my 30.06 with a real scope. Again it's bucks only season. After seeing several does run past the stand, I hear some shots to my right. I stay alert and hope to see something coming my way. Then



*Capt. Kerry's Best Buck*

way off in the bottom, it looks like a buck coming my way. He's running hard, but stops about 100 yards from the stand, I fire, he takes off, I fire again and again, not realizing that he would run even if hit on the first shot. Finally he falls. He is a beautiful 8 point buck that dressed out at 170 lbs. He's the only deer mounted in my house. My thanks to Ricky for helping me drag that deer out, which took about two hours.



**Another Carroll County story.** We used to hunt pheasants, before the foxes got the best of them. We had them on our rental farm near Westminster. But I will always remember the day I was coming from Pennsylvania to Harney, just north of Taneytown, where I found a field of about 150 pheasants. I had never seen that many birds in one place in all my years of hunting in Carroll County. My friend Mark Turner tells me they still have big groups like that in the mid-west where he hunts every year.

We used to kill pheasants and rabbits on my Uncle Babe's farm in Finksburg. They soon disappeared to the foxes. But the rabbits are coming back according to my cousin Reed, who is a trapper. He traps 10 to 15 foxes a year on the his father's farm. I

remember seeing my Uncle Bill kill his first goose on the farm years ago when there were no geese in that area. Now, they are everywhere. Another memory about the farm is rabbit hunting with beagles on the farm. We would just stand at the hilltop and let the dogs work the bottom. It's a beautiful sound to hear a beagle get on the rabbit trail and work it. They do all the work. The biggest problem with beagles is that they are too friendly. They will go to anyone. They love people. My Uncle Babe and my Dad lost many beagles over the years. I was with my Dad when we lost one dog and it really upset my Uncle.

Darlene and I had two beagles which we bought from Lou Sharkey in Westminster. We called them Bo and Bea. They were great dogs until one day they just took off and found a new family.



**One last Carroll County** story. Todd, Chad and I had been hunting at Uncle Babe's farm and decided to stop in to see my grandmother at her farm in Finksburg. We told her we had a slow day hunting rabbits at Babe's farm due to the number of foxes. She said I have plenty of rabbits out back. We checked it out and took nine rabbits in less than an hour without dogs.

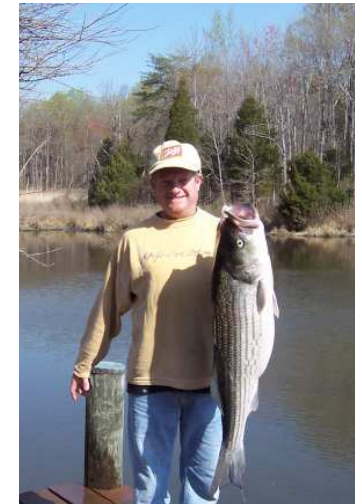
Norm and I had the opportunity to hunt rabbits again with Chad and his friends in 2005 on his property in Hurlock. These guys, friends of my friend John Brown, brought six beagles, and they were great. We killed 13 rabbits and never lost a dog.



**I'm trying to remember** the boys first hunt. I know on my first hunt I killed a chipmunk, which I thought was a squirrel. Anyway that's what I told my Dad. With my boys, I remember taking Todd behind the State Roads Dump on Defense Highway in Annapolis. No gun, at first he would just



*Chad and Todd with Squirrels*





walk with me and that took a lot training (heel first), and learning how to sit and listen to the forest around you. I remember with Chad (our little motor mouth) while setting on a log, he starts yelling “watch out, Dad.” I raise up with my gun ready and say what did you see? He says, “ that spider over there.”

## WESTERN MARYLAND

**Harry Gessford** rented a cabin near Savage River State Forest for the deer season. A whole bunch of us from West Annapolis and Edgewater would pitch in for food and lodging and have a good time for a few days each year. I remember the first year, we had 17 people. It was a big cabin, we had people sleeping everywhere. No running water, but we had a double wide 2 seat outhouse, first class in that area.

On Friday night everybody went to town, which was Grantsville, 25 miles away. A lot of hunters, lots of drinking and partying. I remember that very few women were there, and the ones that did show up, didn’t have any teeth. Most of us didn’t get back to bed until 3 am and we had to get up 5 am. I’m proud to say that I was one the three that made it out the next morning. Didn’t see anything, should have stayed in bed.



**It was a cold morning** during deer season in Western Maryland. I was driving my pickup down Savage River Rd. to my stand about 5:30 am when I saw a large buck coming down the hill towards the truck. I stopped, but the deer crashed into the fender. I said “this must be my lucky day” as I got of the truck with my gun to finish off the deer. But as soon as the door opened the buck got up ran back up the mountain before I could not get a shot off. It turned out to be the lucky day for the buck. I did not see another deer that day. A few days later after we returned home, Darlene, who was working at Whitmore Printing at the time, tells me that their Pressman Rodney was in Western Maryland hunting last week, and came back and told everybody about a guy in the camp that had a deer run into the side of his truck. Darlene says, I think I heard that story before. I didn’t know Rod-

ney worked with Darlene.



**Back in the 70s** we were still hunting in Western Maryland. A bunch of us at the West Annapolis Volunteer Fire Dept. were camped out at Green Ridge State Forest. Rusty Sears bagged a nice six pointer early Saturday Morning. We all ended up at the camp to celebrate with some bourbon and coke. After lunch and few drinks, we all ventured out again to find our buck (buck only season). I found a nice spot on top of a hill overlooking a valley below. Maybe it was the nice weather or the bourbon and coke, but I quickly fell asleep for a much needed nap. I woke up in a daze about two hours later to find deer all over the place. I raised my gun and shot. To my dismay, I found out that I had shot a nice large doe out of season. I quickly covered her up and reported back to camp. After a meeting of our tribal leaders we developed a plan of attack. Four of us would go back after the deer at night and bring it back to the camp, where we would skin and cut it up. I placed the deer in trash bags and iced it down in a cooler to take back to Annapolis.

At the time, we didn't have a freezer, but I was working for the State Seafood Marketing Authority, which had a nice freezer in its kitchen. I placed the deer there, with plans to buy a freezer soon. Easter rolls around and the deer is still in the state freezer. We were closed for the holiday and then sometime, most likely before the holiday, the freezer went up. On Monday, when everybody returns to work, the smell is unbelievable. It's horrible. We blamed it on the bad seafood, but it was the deer. The boss nearly fired me for this one. But, I really think it was my Dad up in heaven, he wanted me to know that he did not bring me up to break the law. Dad, that was my first time and last. Thanks.



**Bob Negal** had a cabin in Western Maryland in the heart of deer country. I don't remember killing any deer, but I remember having a real good time, playing cards, drinking whiskey, telling lies, and eating some good food. Ollie Ward, was with us one time. After three days of partying, Ollie decided to go hunting. That's when he realized he had left his gun home. Who needs a gun to have a good time.

ciation, member of Southern Anne Arundel County Chamber of Commerce and member of their Ambassador committee; a member of Annapolis Elks #620, a past member of the Annapolis Moose, the Knights of Pythias, and the United Church of Christ. He received the Outstanding Community Service Award in 1990 from the LTPOA.

He is a 40 year volunteer fireman, serving in the Westminster, West Annapolis and Woodland Beach volunteer fire departments. He was an EMT, serving as an line officer, Engine and Ambulance Driver, and the also as the president of the Woodland Beach Company.

He has received various awards during his lifetime which included, "Honorary Kentucky Colonel." and was a member of President Regan's National Export Council. He also did volunteer public relations for the American Cancer Society and the Maryland Retarded Children's Association. He is a longtime sponsor and member of Ducks Unlimited and enjoys duck and goose hunting with his yellow lab, Sundee.

Airlines to Norway, Sweden, and Finland. He was also an noted speaker on seafood consumer education. He spoke to groups throughout the United States, Europe and Asia. He was the president of Sea Mart, which sold seafood merchandising items to seafoOf SeaMart, which sold seafood merchandising items to seafood stores across the nation. He was co-owner of Capt. Kelly's Seafood in Annapolis.

In 1974 he received his Maryland Real Estate License. He worked part-time for Hallock & Associates, Mann Real Estate, and Ashley Vick Real Estate. He 1989 he became a full time associate with Long & Foster, where he was "Rookie of Year" In 1992 he joined Re/Max in Edgewater. He is a graduate of the Realtor Institute (GRI), a Certified residential Agent (CRS), and Associate Broker. He is a lifetime member of the Distinguished Sales Achievement Club of Anne Arundel County and the Anne Arundel Masters Club, whose members produce more than \$7 million in annual sales. From Re/Max he received the 100% Club Award, The Presidents Club Award and The Platinum Award. He also runs Kerry Muse Property Management and is the president of KD Realty, Inc.

An active boater since childhood, he has held a United States Coast Guard 50 ton Captain's License, and operated the charter boat Darlene II for more than 20 years from the Happy Harbor in Deale. He specializes in Trophy Rockfish and Black Drum. He also does talks on fishing to various groups throughout Maryland. He has been a member of the Maryland Waterman's Association for more than 30 years (Joined in 1976), The Maryland Charter Boat Association, The Deale Captains Association, and the Upper Bay Captains Association. After retiring from Charter fishing, he and his wife travel throughout the bay on their 33 ft. Searay "Haley Marie".

Active in the community, he was a member of the Jaycees, serving as president of Westminster Jaycees, and serving the Maryland Jaycees, as district Vice president, National Director and State External vice-president. He was awarded the highest award in the organization, JCI Senator #16325. He also served as a director and the vice-president of the London Town Property Owners Assn.; a coach and member of the Mayo Athletic Asso-

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**I only had two** experiences with turkey hunting. The first time I was in Western Maryland walking to my stand when a wild turkey jumped out of tree and flew 70 miles hour in front me. Needless to say, I nearly s... myself. I could not believe that any bird that big could fly that fast.



*First Turkey Hunt*

My second experience was with Chad in Calvert County. Chad had been scouting an area just east of Prince Frederick. We arrived at the location at about 6 am. Shooting time was 6:45 am. Chad put me in a spot and told me what direction the birds would be coming. He moved to a location about 25 yards behind me to my right. He started to call and in a short time they answered him. This conversation between Chad and the turkeys continued for the next 10 minutes. Chad then came up to me and told me to point my gun 30 degrees to the right. I did so.

He continues to call and within a few minuets three bearded turkeys show their heads just at the spot where Chad told me to point my gun. I fire and killed one and the others ran to the right and Chad took out his young Tom. It was a great day. I hear stories of people hunting turkey for years and never getting a shot. I don't know if I was just lucky, or maybe I had a good guide. Thanks Chad.

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## **POTTER COUNTY**

**I was with Norm** at his sister's house in Potter County Pa. during deer season. Norm shot a buck on the top of the mountain. After field dressing the 175 lb. 8 pointer, we started to drag it down the mountain, which wasn't a bad pull since it was downhill and on snow. When we got to creek below we only had 12

feet to go up to the road. We could not do it. We tried for nearly an hour to get that deer up to the road. It just didn't work. We had to walk back to Marie's house and get the truck to pull that deer up.

We had some good times in Potter County. Did you ever see the post card with the hunter pouring coffee while the buck runs past. That happened to me. Just setting there pouring a cup of coffee and a nice buck runs by! No time to get my gun up. I'm not sure that gun would have worked anyway. It was a .44 Magnum rifle, firing 240 gram center loads. It held 14 shells, and was lever action. It will kill an elephant at 25 yards, but it would not hit the paper at 50 yards. The shell was too heavy for long range shooting. I found this out the next day, when I unloaded the gun at a running deer while on a drive. I got the nickname "machine gun Kerry" after that.



**Another Potter County** story. Norm's brother Wes brought a friend from New Jersey. This guy owned a gun shop and he bragged about all the deer he had killed and how good he was. Well, I didn't like him from the start and I didn't believe him. On the first day back at the house he tells us he blew the leg off of a deer at 1000 yards. Sure, where's the deer? The next afternoon, we see this guy on the side of the road, with his gun on sand bags on the hood of his jeep aimed at the mountain in front of us. He says there's a 10 pointer and an 8 pointer up there at 1200 yards. Says he trying to make up his mind which one to take. He had the gun, a Weatherby, with a range finder scope. I saw him take out the 10 pointer at 1200 yards. It took them two hours to get the deer. The next day they got another. And the hunting camp down the road shot a three legged deer. That's NRA shooting, but not hunting in my book.



**While returning** from Potter County many years ago, Albert, Norm, Charlie and myself stopped in Camp Hill to relieve ourselves. We stopped at a parking lot with parked school buses. Seemed private enough, but soon after we left, a police cruiser showed up behind us. He just followed us closely. Then another cruiser pulled out in front of us. Now we have cops in front and

## Capt. Kerry's Bio

Kerry Muse, native of Westminster, Md. has lived in Edgewater since 1974. He is a graduate of Westminster High, where he lettered in Soccer. He also attended the Baltimore College of Commerce where he earned an Associates Degree in Business Administration.

During his teens he was active in scouting, earning 23 merit badges, and serving as the leader of an Air Explorer Post, one of the first in the State of Maryland. Later he served as an Assistant Scout Master. He spent 11 years in the newspaper business, working for Baltimore News America, The Baltimore Purchaser, The Carroll County Times, and was the publisher of the Adams County Illustrated Press in Littlestown, Pa. At the News American, he was Assistant Financial Editor, Police reporter, and record review columnist. He once interviewed the Beatles on their Baltimore tour. He was also the General Manager of the Carroll County Times, and was instrumental in moving the paper from a weekly to a tri-weekly format. He owned and operated the Illustrated Press for several years before taking a public relations position with the State of Maryland in Annapolis in 1973.

He was deputy director of the Seafood Marketing Authority, where he traveled throughout the United States promoting Maryland Seafood. In 1979 he became the Executive Director of the Mid-Atlantic Fisheries Development Foundation, an Annapolis-based non-profit organization founded by 17 commercial fisheries organizations from New York to North Carolina. He was responsible for seafood consumer education and Export promotion of Mid-Atlantic Seafood Products. He was also the Exhibit Director of Seafood USA, where he assisted US and Maryland companies in showing their products at international Food Shows in Cologne, Germany; Paris, France; London, England, and Barcelona, Spain. He also conducted two trade missions with SAS

**Duck recipe #1**

Skin ducks out whole, salt , pepper. Place sliced apple and onion in cavity. place ducks in covered pot with small amount of water, stick in oven at 300 for 90 mins.

**Duck Recipes #2**

Breast them out, marinate in Italian dressing overnight, throw on the grill at low heat, flip once, and eat away.

**Duck Recipes #3**

Breast out; let breasts soak in water for 5 minutes; place breasts in oven and cook for 10 minutes with no marinades, sauces, salt, pepper or bacon.

Skin and breast them out, take 1/4 cup Worcestershire, 1/4 cup soy sauce, 2tbs Dijon mustard, small can of crushed pineapple, 1/2 cup of orange juice, and a large bottle of zesty Italian dressing mix together. Add breast, marinate for 24 hr. wrap in bacon or better yet Pancetta and cook on grill until rare to med rare, serve as soon as possible as they will cont. to cook off the grill.

back. Then instantly the lights and sirens go on. Of course we stopped, didn't have a choice.

Once they found out that we had guns in the truck, they called for more backup. They checked out Albert's tag and license, then asked us to follow them. I remember Charlie saying "Where are we going?" Albert comes back "to jail you moron." He was right. They marched us into the jailhouse/police station, where we were held for two hours, while they checked us out. It seems someone saw us at the bus lot and thought we were stealing gas.

**DUCK AND GOOSE HUNTING**

**At one time I** hunted out of the Loch Haven Blind on the South River, which was a large blind that would fit 5 to 6 hunters. In fact, it was so big that I cooked breakfast in the blind every Saturday morning. We even had the Marine Police stop by to taste the scrapple. One morning, while I'm cooking, we saw three birds coming directly at the blind I yelled to Norm and the others to take'm, The group in the front of the blind managed to get off a few shots, but hit nothing. I then put down the frying pan and picked up my gun and killed the last bird going by. Since I was shooting from the back of blind the others were in the front, the sound of the gun going off was deafening to the other guys ears. Norm blames his bad hearing on me for shooting too close to his ear on that day.



**I had many** different boats and blinds. One year we took a 12 ft. Jon boat and built a blind on it. We pulled it with another larger 16 ft. boat. The larger boat safely held 3 people and a dog. One morning Mark Turner joined us and we asked Mark to ride in the blind, so we didn't overload the other boat. Mark looked at the blind and said he didn't think so. He said it didn't look that safe to him. I assured him we had towed that blind up and down the river for two years and never had a problem. Today, the weather was cold, with a 15-20 knot wind out the north. Since we were not going that far from the Loch Haven Ramp, I told Mark he would be fine. But Mark insisted that I come back and get him

after unloading. We agreed. As we proceeded to leave the dock, a strong 20 knot wind gust hit hard on the port side, and about 100 yards offshore the “safe” blind swamped. We were able get it back to shore and bail it out and continue with our hunt, but Mark decided he was not going to hunt that day. Mark is still a good friend, but he won’t go duck hunting with Capt. Kerry.



**We had several hunting dogs**, but I think the best was Sundee. After we lost Beau to a car, we waited before getting another dog. I learned a lot about buying the right dog from Capt. Brian Keehn, who basically said I need a dog with parents that have show championship credentials on one side and field championship on the other side. Sundee’s mother, “Budder” was a show champion from Cedar Hill Retrievers, Halifax, VA. Her father, Yukon Jack, is from Georgia, was the master hunter.



*Sundee at 8 weeks*

Her name Sundee was taken from the family tree, where it was in place for three of her relatives. Her official AKC name is Kerry’s Sundee Buddercup. She cost us \$1,000, \$900 to the kennel and \$100 for the speeding ticket in South Western Virginia. When we arrived at the kennel to pick her out, we found out that 7 of the original 10 had already been pre-sold to buyers across the United States. We still had pick of litter. I was impressed that the kennel had such a good reputation. They also raised ducks there and used them in field trails.



**One Year Chad** got a permit to hunt ducks in the Jug Bay Wetlands area. I thought it was amazing that he got there in the dark (no moon – just clouds) and we shot birds, it was a good day. By mid morning Todd was starting to say he had to go to work and was ready to leave. We didn’t have our limit, but all agreed it was still a good day. As we proceed to pick-up, we discovered the tide has gone out completely. We have less that a foot

IONS IN OLIVE OIL AND SET ASIDE TO COOL. AFTER FISH IS DONE, PLACE FISH IN COLLANDER, RINSE IN COLD WATER AND PRESS OUT AS MUCH WATER AS POSSIBLE. FLAKE FISH INTO SMALL PIECES (LIKE THE CONSISTENCY OF PICKED CRAB) IN A LARGE MIXING BOWL. MIX ALL INGREDIENTS, EXCEPT FISH AND BREADCRUMBS, IN A SEPARATE MIXING BOWL AND ADD COOLED ONIONS AND OLIVE OIL, BLEND UNTIL THOROUGHLY BLENDED. POUR BLENDED INGREDIENTS OVER FISH, THOROUGHLY MIX SLOWLY ADD BREADCRUMBS WHILE THOROUGHLY MIXING UNTIL THE MIXTURE HOLDS ITS SHAPE, NOT TOO DRY AND NOT TOO MOIST. ROLL INTO 2" BALLS AND FLATTEN INTO PATTIES. BAKE @350 DEGREES FOR ABOUT 30-45 MIN. OR DEEP FRY UNTIL GOLDEN BROWN.

## **Ducks & Goose Recipes**

Cut into bite sized chunks, marinade in Italian dressing, wrap with bacon and a slice of jalapeno stuck in there, stick a toothpick through to hold and grill over hot coals until the bacon is done and the goose is about medium.

### **Goose Burgers**

- 1) Grind goose breast up
  - 2) Grind some hickory smoke bacon up
  - 3) Mix 80% GB 20% bacon add a few chopped chives/onion/garlic and some Worcestershire.
- Chill and form into patties

constantly stirring when they get half way soft  
30 minutes) pour off oil/butter and add in two  
cans of Chicken broth and turn down heat and  
add rockfish and a small or half can of corn.  
Add 3 tablespoons of OLD BAY  
1 tablespoon of Paprika  
salt/pepper to taste.  
allow to simmer for another 30 mins.

Turn off and allow to cool and add enough  
milk or half/half (pint) to completely turn  
chowder white.

### **Bluefish recipe**

Filet and remove dark meat. Rinse and pat dry.  
Squeeze on a fresh lemon for starters, salt and  
pepper to taste . Mix mayo and Dijon mustard  
2 to 1, to paint a good coating on the fish Top  
with sliced sweet onions. Bake in 350 oven  
~20 minutes .

### **Bluefish Cakes**

2 lbs. BLUEFISH FILLETS  
2 1/2 TBSP. MAYONNAISE  
1 1/2 TBSP. DIJON MUSTARD  
2 EGGS  
~2 CUPS ITALIAN BREADCRUMBS  
1 SMALL CHOPPED ONION  
2 TBSP. OLIVE OIL  
1 TBSP. OLD BAY SEASONING

CUT FISH INTO 4' CUBES AND POACH IN  
BOILING WATER UNTIL DONE (WHITE  
& FLAKEY) APPROX. 5 MIN.

WHILE FISH IS COOKING - SAUTEE ON

of water. It's me, Todd, Norm, and Chad, in Bob's old Carolina skiff, which is a heavy fiberglass boat to push in the mud. When we tried to push we found out the mud was soft with no hard bottom for about two feet. The only way to push and pull the boat was for everybody to get out and help. Trying to push that boat in the mud was nearly impossible for Norm and I. We took turns riding and resting and then back in the mud again for another 10 ft. Chad and Todd, being younger were able to keep the boat going.

During this process, we noticed a goose off to our left. It was a cripple that escaped earlier. We put Sundee on it and she chased it in the mud. Every time she would get close, the goose would swim off. Sundee while jumping to make process in the two foot mud, kept getting closer and finally after chasing the bird for about half mile caught the 10 lb. goose and jumped through the mud for another 1/4 mile back to the boat with that goose in her mouth. It's was an amazing one mile retrieve, which took about hour. After about three hours the tide finally came back and we had four totally exhausted guys and one tired muddy dog. Another great day on the water.



**It was late in January** and Chad and his friend Kevin had borrowed the boat to go sea duck hunting off Thomas Point Light. They left early in the morning and we expected them back in the afternoon. Sometimes when the morning hunt is slow, we would stay until sunset to get another session with the early evening fly. At about 1 pm I started to worry about the boys. It was cold and blowing 15 to 20 knots. I knew Chad would not hunt in that wind, so I thought sure that they would come in early.

I waited until 2 pm and told Darlene something was wrong. I just knew something was wrong. We drove up to Thomas Point Park, where the park ranger let us in. We walked out to the point where we could see the lighthouse off in the distance, but we saw no boats in sight. We went back home and came back again at 5 pm. No boats. No sign of Chad. We called Kevin's parents, the marine police and the Coast Guard. Nobody had heard anything. We checked the dock again and finally just went home to be near the phone.

Finally at about 8 pm, we received a call from Chad, he and Kevin were OK and at the Coast Guard Station in Annapolis. And did they have a story to tell. It seems that when the wind got up they decided it was time to go in. As they made their way in, the heavy waves kept filling the boat with water. Kevin and Chad both bailed while still heading toward the river, but when they got about 100 yards past the lighthouse, they knew they were not going to be able to make it. Chad thought his best move would be to turn around into the wind and get to the lighthouse, which they did after considerable amount time and effort to keep the boat afloat.

Once they got there, they broke open a door to the abandoned 100 year old structure. No food, nothing to drink, but it was a lot warmer than the 40 degree water temperature of the Chesapeake Bay. After an hour, they were in luck, a Marine Police boat was coming their way. They tried to wave them down, but the boat didn't see them, so they took one of the guns and fired three shots. The police boat kept on going, not seeing or hearing the boys. It was another long six hours before a Coast Guard boat on its way to the Annapolis Base in Fishing Creek, spotted the boys and came back to pick them up.

Chad told them to leave the boat and he would get it the next day. But they said they would tow it back to the station. They put a 50 ft. line on the boat and Chad told them that would not work, but you can't tell the Coast Guard what to do. They towed the boat with a 50 ft. line and lost it within 15 minutes. We were not worried about the boat since the boys were safe. The next morning I went up to Coast Guard station to thank them for rescuing the boys. I got quite a reception. After waiting nearly an hour to see the officer on duty. I was told I would have to contact Norfolk for any information on the incident. The Coast Guard in Norfolk told me I had to file a petition for a request of public information under the freedom of Information Act. I found out later this was due to them sinking the duck boat. After about six months, we agreed on a payment of \$1200 to replace the boat, which was probably worth about \$5,000.



**One year** we had a 16 ft. catamaran which my brother

Place cleaned filets in a 15 inch glass baking dish. Pour Italian dressing generously over the filets until partially immersed in dressing. Lightly sprinkle Italian Seasoning and Lemon Pepper over filets. Generously sprinkle Parmesan cheese until the filets are covered. Bake at 350 for approx 15 min or until fish flakes.

### **BAKED ROCK RECIPE**

2 pounds of dressed fish filets.  
 2 tablespoons melted butter.  
 1/3 cup dry white wine (this is the key to this recipe).  
 1/2 tablespoon soy sauce.  
 1/8 teaspoon pepper.  
 1/8 teaspoon paprika.

Place fish in a well-greased baking dish. Sprinkle with salt, pepper and paprika. Melt butter; add wine and soy sauce. Pour over filets. Bake in moderate oven (350 degrees) for 15-20 minutes, or until fish flakes easily when tested with a fork. Serve with remaining sauce poured over the fish.

### **Rockfish Chowder**

cut fillets into small cubes  
 uses as much as you want (couple 3 fillets)  
 2 cups sliced carrots  
 2 cups sliced celery  
 2 cups chopped (cubed) potatoes  
 2 cups chopped onion  
 sauté veggies in butter or oil on high heat

## **Rockfish Recipes**

### **Lemon Basil Rockfish**

1 cup milk  
 Hot sauce to taste  
 1tbsp dried basil  
 1tsp thyme  
 3tbsp chopped garlic  
 salt to taste  
 black pepper to taste  
 1/2 cup chopped green onion  
 3/4 stick REAL butter  
 juice from 1/2 lemon  
 1/2 Cup Shredded Parmesan Cheese

Rockfish fillets-soak in milk & hot sauce for 1 hour prior to cooking. Let butter soften at room temp. Combine all seasonings, garlic, green onions & lemon juice with softened butter...blend well. Remove fillets from milk & pat dry. Place fillets in greased baking dish. Liberally spread butter mixture over fillets. Bake approx. 10-12 minutes at 380. When fish is nearly done remove from oven & cover with parmesan cheese. Turn oven to broil & replace fillets. Cook until cheese is completely melted & golden brown on the edge.

### **Baked Rockfish**

2 large Rockfish filets  
 1 bottle Zesty Italian dressing  
 1 bottle Schilling Italian Seasoning  
 1 bottle Lemon pepper

1 bottle Parmesan Cheese

Ricky hauled on the top of his car from Florida to Maryland. This was a big blind. We had Chad, Todd, Norm and Bob, who had just gotten back from Desert Storm in Iraq, plus Beau, our yellow lab. It was the first day for the new blind and we were hunting a new site on Larrimore Pt. in Glebe Bay.

Right after we knocked down the first duck, Beau was retrieving and a guy comes on the hill with shotgun next to where we are hunting, about 100 yards away. This guy whose name was Larrimore fired a shot and started yelling at us saying we were hunting on a private oyster bottom. We yelled right back at him, but decided it was time to leave and call the Marine Police. While we are having this conversation about who is legal, Marine Bob kept us guarded with his gun pointed right at Larrimore the whole time.

We had him arrested, and when he got out he threaten to burn down my house. We had him arrested again. This time they got him on child abuse charges and he did some time. It was a good legal site but we decided not to hunt it again. Larrimore dropped in to see me a few years later and half way apologized for being drunk that day.



**Back to duck hunting.** I remember some great hunting on Almshouse Creek off South River. This is before South River Landing. One of our best days was with Norm, Chad and Norm's Dog Missy. Chad was only 10 or 11 at the time. We are hunting out of a 14 ft. Jon boat, which we set on the waters edge. On this occasion we had two mallards come from behind. Norm and I both turned around to shoot, as we shot, both Chad and Missy jumped out the boat, while the compression of the shots pushed our bodies back far enough to lose our balance and fall backwards into the water. While Norm and I are both in water, Chad cannot stop laughing. In fact he still laughs at us years later for that little incident. By the way, we killed the mallards.



**Another High Wind** story on the South River occurred with me and David Senft while hunting the Loch Haven blind. We set out about six dozen decoys and settled in the blind on a day with a light breeze, but not gale force. In less than hour the

wind went from 5 knots to 40 knots.

The decoys were being blown away and the birds were not flying in this stuff. We had a small boat under the blind which the 3 to 4 ft. waves were starting to fill. We were only two hundred yards off shore, but a long half mile to the ramp. I didn't think we could make it to the ramp, but I thought we had 50/50 shot to making it to the beach. I told David, "let's try to make the beach, but let's leave the guns here. We can always come back for them. If the boat gets swamped, we still may be able to get to the shoreline, but I don't want to lose my gun". He agreed.

The trip to the shoreline was not that bad, we just gunned it and ran as hard and fast as we could. After I got home and warmed up, the phone rang. It's David, who is begging me to go back and get his decoys and gun. It's still blowing a gale, and we don't have a boat that can handle that water. I put a call in to JJ Fegan, who has a 26 ft. Carolina hull used for crabbing. It's a big boat and could handle the seas. JJ should have said "no way" but he said "let's go for it." David and I met JJ at his Pine Whiff Beach dock and took the two mile trip with the west wind on our backs.

The trip was rough and cold, but we did get there, got the guns, and picked up 3 decoys. The wind had taken the remaining 50 some to the Chesapeake Bay. On the return trip, it was unbelievable as we headed into the west wind, JJ standing at the side console trying to make 10 knots with the waves splashing on him. David and I are laying down on the floor in the bow of boat, trying to keep some balance, but every 10 seconds we hit a wave that propeled our bodies 10" in the air. We felt like we were getting beat with a stick. The return trip took twice as long and when we pulled into Almshouse Creek, JJ was as white as a snowman. The splashing waves had coated him and frozen on his clothes. Everybody is safe and sound, guns back, decoys gone, another great day on the water.



**Speaking of cold winters**, it was late in January and the river had almost closed. JJ and Charlie Fegan had been hunting sea ducks in the bay and had made a path two days earlier. They invited Norm and I to join them. We left the dock at about 5 am,

1/2 tsp Slat

Oil for Frying

Pound steaks with meat mallet to 1/4" thickness  
MAX. Combine the flour, garlic powder, pepper, cayenne, salt. Heat Oil in cast iron skillet at meat in Flour mixture, then dip in eggs and then into the bread crumbs. Fry 2-3 minutes each side or until the blood starts to rise through one each side.

### **Peppered Deer Steak**

1/2 cup soy sauce

1- buck tenderloin

1/4 cup veg. oil

2- large green peppers

1- large onion

2- large tomatoes

Black pepper to taste

Slice loin across the grain thinly then lay flat and cut into strips like stir fry meat. Add meat and soy sauce together in a large bowl and allow it to marinate while you cut the veg. Cut veg. in strips and the tomatoes into wedges. Add oil to a wok or large skillet heat and add meat and soy sauce and brown meat. Add onions and peppers cover and simmer until peppers and onions are cooked down to your liking.

### **Tenderloin Roast**

Marinate in 1 cup white wine overnight

Wrap bacon strips around and lightly brown and sear in skillet

Then place in crock pot with potatoes, carrots, onions and fresh mushrooms. Add 1 cup of white wine. Cook on low for approx 4-6 hours.

## **Recipes**

### **JERKY**

2-5 lbs. lean beef or venison or goose  
 1/2 cup brown sugar  
 2 tbsp Worcestershire sauce  
 1/2 tsp garlic powder  
 1 tsp onion powder  
 1 tsp old bay  
 1/4 tsp Tabasco  
 1/4 tsp ground red pepper  
 1/2 tsp black pepper  
 2 cups water  
 1 tsp salt-non iodized salt

Cut meat 1/8 in thick-easiest to do if still partially frozen mix all ingredients in bowl and marinade 24 hrs or longer, dry strips of meat in smoker or oven or dehydrator until meat is dried thoroughly. If done in oven or dehydrator and smoke flavor is wanted baste with liquid smoke during drying process oven temp should not exceed 200 degrees. 170 degrees is best, if using oven, door should be propped open a little to let moisture escape and dry on a raised rack, drying times will vary with method used . Dry until you get the same consistency as the store bought stuff.

### **CHICKEN FRIED STEAK**

1 1/2 # Venison Steaks Sliced  
 1 tsp Garlic Powder  
 1/4 tsp Cayenne  
 2 eggs beaten  
 1 1/2 Cups Bread Crumbs  
 1 Cup Flour  
 1 tsp Pepper

but find out the river had iced over again. It took almost two hours before we got to the sea duck zone.

There is no clear water, it's all slush ice. We have Beau with us, who has been doing a fairly good job this season of retrieving for a hard-headed yellow lab. We knocked the first bird down and sent Beau in the water. He hits the 32 degree water and almost stops dead with the shock of water. He then turns and looks at me with this expression on his face that says "you get your own damn duck." We got him back in the boat and warmed him up with a blanket. He recovered quite well and did several more retrieves that day, but I don't think he liked it.



**I ran a 23 ft. Sea Ox** for hunting for a few years. We hunted in Herring Bay off Deale. A few years ago it was just me and Sundee on a very cold day. Temperatures were in the teens, the water was already freezing in Herring Bay. I finally found a hole in the ice, set out half dozen decoys. And almost before I could get the gun loaded they started to come in. I was using my Benelli Black Eagle with a three and half inch load of steel shot. I'm right on the first bird, as I squeeze the trigger, the gun goes click, not firing. I figured I had a bad shell, eject and try again, since I still have ducks all over the place. I fire, click. I'm going crazy. So is Sundee, who does not understand why I'm not shooting these ducks.

After a frustrating day, we finally get a few birds for Sundee to retrieve. After a second session in Cedarhurst on the Bay of the gun not firing, I found out from my expert friend Vic Carbone that I shouldn't be using WD40 to clean my gun instead of gun oil. In freezing weather WD40 freezes. Lesson learned.



**When Sundee** was just a year old, Norm and I were hunting in Herring Bay. I don't remember too much about the hunt, but as we are returning to the Happy Harbor in Deale, I looked around and asked Norm "where's Sundee"? He said "I don't know". At the same time the oil alarm goes off, I go to get the spare oil and find the last one has been used. I cuss Chad, who used the boat last and forgot to replace the oil supply.

We are already in Rockhold Creek, and a only a few hun-

dred yards from the dock. I get the extra oil in the tank and we take off again down Rockhold Creek looking for Sundee. We think she may have jumped off near Manifolds where a mute swan hangs out. We didn't see her but continued to search the creek, when my cell phone rang. It's Capt. Dick Grimes, who says, "there's a gentlemen here at the Happy Harbor with your dog".

This is about 20 minutes after we noticed she was gone. I can't remember the gentlemen's name, but I asked him how he knew I had lost the dog, since I hadn't told anybody. He lives on Rockhold Creek in the area where the swan hangs out. He said Sundee showed up on his back door and barked to come in. She still had her hunting vest on and he knew she belonged to someone local.

He put her in the back of his pick-up and drove up to the 7-11, which is the unofficial City Hall for Deale. He asked if anyone has lost a yellow lab, and someone told him a captain from the Happy Harbor had. He shows up, Capt. Dick calls me. Story ends. But can you believe that in a small town, everybody knows everybody's business all the time.



**Marty Lieberman**, local owner of Marty's Sporting Goods does hunt and fish, despite the local rumors to the contrary. One day Marty, Norm, Albert, and I were duck hunting just east of Glebe Bay, The sunrise was just unbelievable. The sun looked like it filled the whole river as it rose over the Chesapeake Bay. It was just beautiful. I was into photography at the time and wanted to preserve this moment on film.

As the sun rose I took many photos and made Marty, Norm and Albert, stand between me and the sun with their guns pointed toward sky. Believe me, this was an award winning photo. Anyway it was a 35 mm roll of film with 36 pictures. I told the guys that I wanted to finish the roll before developing. The guys keep asking me about the pictures and I told them I needed to finish the roll. I kept taking pictures, but I never did get to the end. Being suspicious, I took the camera to local shop and they quickly explained to me that my film never engaged. No pictures. I told the guys and did I catch hell, after making them pose

taking the blame for his dismissal, but Mark now has unlimited fishing trips on my boat anytime he wants to go.



**John Marks** told me not to leave this story out. A group of us from Londontown were at Buddy Harrison's Chesapeake House one weekend. We were standing around drinking a few few beers when a 50 ft Baja (go fast boat) comes in looking for a dock space. Driving the boat is a 50 year old+ guy with several gold chains around his neck and two 20 year old beauty queens setting beside him. John offers his help, "do your granddaughters need some help with the lines"? His response was quick and nasty "they are not my granddaughters and we do not need your help". I always wanted one those go fast boats with the two 20 year olds, but Darlene told me I wasn't wired for 220.



### **Fishing with the grandchildren**

has to be a lifetime experience you will never forget. Haley, Reed, Garrett and Hunter, all caught their first fish with Pop Pop. Haley, being the oldest has



fished with us since she was 2 years old. We fished the bay, the rivers, Assawomen Bay in Ocean City and Tangier Sound.



**During late May** fishing slows down. The big fish are gone. The little rock don't come into season until June 1st, and there are almost no bottomfish or blues around. Despite this know factual data, I wanted to go out look for drum. I invited my good friend Mark Bundy, a long time employee of DNR. Mark asked me if he can bring along his secretary. I tell him "sure, bring her along."

On the morning we plan to go out, it's cold, damp and raining, nothing that would stop us from going out. Mark is already on the boat, and I see someone coming down the dock. He looks familiar, but I can't seem to place the face. He has fly rod, tackle box and cooler. As Mark says "good morning Mr. Secretary" I now realize who we have onboard, Dr. Ron Franks, Secretary, Maryland Dept. of Natural Resources.

It turned out to be the most embarrassing day of my 30 year charter fishing career. We tried everything and everywhere and never got a bite. Of all days, here I was with the most important guy in state fisheries on the my boat and I got the shunk. He was cool about it, but I know he wanted fish. I think it was important for him to know that we do have days like that from time to time. The following year, he opened the 18" rock season in the middle of May.

I should point out that Mark Bundy lost his job as an Assistant Secretary of DNR a few months later. Not that I'm

for the pictures. They will never let me forgot that trip.



**Being at the right place** at the wrong time. When they closed the goose season in Maryland we had to find another location out of state. Harry, Billy and Kent Gessford, Vic and John Carbone and I traveled to several states to find geese. We hunted Kentucky, New York and Arkansas.

They hunted Texas, I refused to lay in the mud to shoot snow geese. In New York, near the finger lakes, we hunted with a Kent Island outfitter who moved his parties to New York. We were in a corn stake blind with thousands, yes thousands of mallard ducks flying over us landing in the decoys. It was unbelievable! But it was goose season. The Mallard season had closed the day before we arrived.

Not to be outdone, in Kentucky (it may have been Missouri) we met our guide at 5 am, followed his pickup for what seemed like two hours to a swamp on some river. Again we saw thousands of ducks, but no geese. The season had closed the day before we arrived. There was a nice riverboat casino there. We did kill our limit of geese in New York, despite the ducks.

Before we go on to the next subject, I should point out that you do not want to hunt with Victor or John Carbone, unless you're the NRA's Marksman of the Year. Let me tell you, these boys will downright embarrass you. All kidding aside, the Carbones can kill anything that flies. These guys are good!



**Earlier I talked** about not going to Texas to hunt in the mud fields. I have a bad back and I cannot sit up and shoot straight. I have a hard time shooting straight from a stand-up position. Recently, Chad invited me and Todd to his place for a goose hunt on the Eastern Shore. Chad, a licensed hunting guide leases about 1,000 acres near Hurlock for his hunting business. When we got there, Chad is talking about the ATV Gator breaking down and not being able to get his truck into a field that is too wet. I didn't pay attention, since we were not hunting that farm anyway. When we got to the other location, we starting setting the decoys out and noticed that there was no blind. I asked Chad about it, and he said he could not get the stand up blind from the other field,

“but don’t worry Dad, we will be using layout blinds”. These blinds are also called a sport utility blind, but they are no more than a piece of canvas with a head rest. You lie in the field with the decoys. When the geese come in, you throw off the facial cover, set up and shoot the bird. Easier said than done. When the first two birds came in, the boys said “take’m”. It’s three of them and I hear all of them unload their guns before I can get up and turned around. As I get up I see one bird still flying, I put him down with two shots. Thank goodness the other guys all went for the same bird, which they killed with 9 shots. When the next set of birds came in, I was not so lucky. This time, when I finally got up, the birds were gone. Never fired another shot. Chad invited me back a week later, where I had the opportunity to hunt out of a real blind. It does make a difference.



**Ed Grumwell**, who worked with me at Long & Foster, lived on a 30 acre farm in Cumberstone, which backed up to the West River. He said he had plenty of geese, but doesn’t have the time to hunt. Ed gave us permission to build a blind and clear the cornfield for setting of the decoys. It took a lot of work to clear the field and build the blind, but it would still take a while to train the birds to come in. Anyway, after a month’s work, Ed called me up and said his wife read up on goose hunting and found out that the male and female mate for life. She pulled the plug even after we assured her that we would kill both the male and female at the same time.

Another story on Ed’s property. While walking down the field one afternoon, I saw a beautiful 8 point buck coming right at me. I stopped to watch, since its not deer season. The deer finally sees me about 20 yards away, he comes to a halt and gives me the look “what are you doing in my field?” For a second I thought he may charge me, as he definitely thought I was a trespasser.



**During one goose** season we had the opportunity to hunt with a national goose calling champion in Kent County. I don’t remember his name, but he was the Pennsylvania champion and had placed in the final five in the country. He came with a briefcase full of calls, each placed in sponge rubbers holders. The

acting like a used car salesman. I called him back and told him, they don’t have to think about it, I’ll take the boat. By the way the boat appraised at \$106,000.



**The SeaRay was named 4 Pete’s Sake** . The owner’s name was Pete. We kept the name for the first year, while trying to decide on a new name. I wanted *Darlene III*, but that was vetoed by Chad and Darlene. I have one daughter and we had already named one boat after her. I now have two granddaughters, Haley Marie and Ally Grace. I tried in vain to come up with a name that included both granddaughters, but it just didn’t work. Ten-year-old Haley was here in Mayo and one-year-old Ally was in Japan. I finally decided that we would name this boat *Haley Marie* and the next one *Ally Grace*, since she will be old enough to remember the next one.

During the first two years we traveled to Rock Hall (four times), Crisfield, Solomons Island, Tilghman Island, Chestertown, Oxford, and Hurlock. Plus we spent several nights out on the Rhode River.



**This was our first trip up the Chester River** and it really is a beautiful river when you travel at six knots. The weekend trip included Norm and Martie on their 28 ft. Carver, the *Noel Lynn*. Just off the Severn River, Norm loses an engine. It’s overheating and he figures it’s an intake exhaust manifold. He continues on one engine and we follow. Hey it was a nice trip at that speed. During the trip, Norm calls his brother-in-law Martin in Chestertown to pick up a new manifold. Martin spends the next three hours trying to find one and finally gets one on Kent Island. We got to Chestertown OK and went to a nice party at Martin’s house. The next morning I help Norm install the manifold, which takes about two hours. The engine still will not start, but Norm thinks the batteries need charging. We are leaving the next morning, one engine starts and Norm stops to get fuel at the gas dock. It took a while for the engine to start back up, but it did, and that boat ran for nearly mile before it stopped dead in the water. We grabbed a tow line and Norm and Martie came aboard for a delightful trip home at six knots.



### In the summer of 2004

Darlene and I joined Martie and Norm for a trip to Rock Hall on their boat. We stayed next to Waterman's Restaurant and really enjoyed ourselves. It had been sometime



*Haley and Sundee on the Haley Marie*

since we had done anything on a weekend, we really did miss traveling the bay with our friends. It was at that time, we decided to sell the charter business and get another pleasure cruiser for our personal use.

Later that year, we saw a SeaRay advertised in the local paper. The boat had very few hours, and was very clean. It had a beautiful interior and a great 13.5 ft. wide fishing deck. It was right boat for Darlene and I, but it was 1997 and we just wanted something new, that would not need constant maintenance. We decided to check the Annapolis Boat Show, we saw a lot of expensive boats. We wanted an inboard, which started at 32 ft. and up. Most boats under \$200,000 had great quarters, but no room for fishing. The bigger boats with nice cabins and fishing decks were twice the money. We really came away disappointed at what we saw. With our limited budget, we had to go back to finding a good used boat. We looked at lot, but keep thinking about that SeaRay we looked at first would be our best buy. We decided to call the owner and see if the boat was still available. No answer and no recorder. After a few days of calling, I decided to drive out to Watagate on Fishing Creek to see if the boat was still on the lift. To my surprise it was still there. Obviously, the owners were not at home. I guessed they went south for the winter. I decided to mail them a letter with my offer. After 10 days, I got a phone call. The boat was still available. He wanted \$90,000. I offered \$85,000. He said they will think about it. I hung up the phone and it hits me. What am I doing. We have been looking at boats for four months and this is the boat we want. I'm

geese flew high that day, but they flew. They flew all day. But they didn't like his calls I guess, because they never came in.

We had a blind site near us that shot at everything that flew over. I think they call it pass shooting. Well, they seemed to knock down about 3 or 4 birds. Our champion caller said be patient, they will come in. Well the guys that were pass shooting finally left, now we can get some shots. No such luck, and now the pass shooters come back with a new case of shells. They continued to shoot, we went home. Good callers may win championships, but to be real good you need to have geese as judges.



**I think the best** goose caller ever (sorry, Sean Mann) is Jessie James Jump. Jessie is a St. Michaels waterman. He's five foot seven and weighs in just under 300 pounds. Jessie crabs in summer and guides goose parties in the winter. When I first met Jessie he was working for Jim Sparrow, a charter boat captain and waterfowl outfitter who drank a fifth of Four Roses a day. Jim had three guides including Jessie working for him. These were the days that we could kill four geese per day.

It was a cold December day when our party of four, including Rich Miller from Long Island, NY, was assigned to Jessie in a field blind just north of St. Michaels. On the same field were the other two guides with two other parties. It was a big field and each blind had a set of 100 to 150 goose decoys. It was so cold that you could see your breath that day. The day started out slow with few birds flying. Finally a group of 7 birds came over the field. All three guides were calling as hard as they could to bring the birds to their respective location. Jessie is working so hard, sweat has covered his brow, as his breath freezes in front of him. The birds circled us twice and I knew they were coming, but all

of sudden they pulled off and headed towards the other end of the field. Jessie is pissed and gets on his horn and goes non stop calling the birds back. They make one circle at the other end of the field, while Jessie is still calling, and then start to come our way. Finally, Jessie brings those seven birds in, we kill five. I now have a guide, the best on the shore.



**At one time** I was a member of the Kent Island Hunting Club, 16 members who paid about \$250 a year to hunt. It was a good club, until development started to hit Kent Island. We lost our lease and found out that \$4,000 a year does not buy much on the shore. We leased some terrible properties over the next few years. I guess it was one of my last years in the club and Chad and I were deer hunting on one of these so called “hunting estates,” which as usual produced no results. As we are driving back from the shore, I stopped at an area near some power lines north of Easton. There were no posted signs and I would like Chad to get a chance at a deer. We enter the woods about 2 pm, and after a hour I hear someone walking toward me. I wave my hat and say hi to the guy. He then puts his gun in my face and tells me I’m hunting on private property without permission. I tell them there are no signs, and he says he does not need signs. He walks me off the property with gun at my back. I find Chad and rip the tag off his back. This guy has my number, but he won’t get Chad’s. We leave and think the incident is over, but a few weeks later a DNR officer comes to my office and explains that I needed permission to hunt there. He gives me a \$100 ticket, I take it court and lose. If you’re from the western shore, don’t even think you will get a break on the eastern shore.



**Lost in New Hampshire.** I really enjoyed hunting in the notch in New Hampshire. Billy Gessford and his wife Dee were living there and invited us up for a deer and bear hunting trip. If I can remember, it was Harry and Kent Gessford and Rollie Thomas and me. We hunted several days and never really fired a shot, but Dee’s cooking was worth the trip.

One afternoon we decided to drive some deer. I was left off at a spot, which required me to walk about a mile towards a

we leave the dock. The captain can’t get his radar to work, so we follow another boat out of the inlet. After several hours, some 60 miles offshore, we lose an engine. The captain thinks it an electrical problem, because of the radar and some other instruments are not working. Someone figures out it’s the alternator. There’s no way to replace an alternator 60 miles off shore.

We did have a guy on board who was an electrical engineer. He had never been in the bilge of a boat before, but he said “let me take a look at it”. Well, this guy rewired the working alternator to the non-working engine and got us running again. I’ll never say anything nasty about engineers again. We have been out now about 8 hours and have not had a pull down. The lines have to be in at 4 pm. At 3:30 pm, we get our first hit, it’s a small tuna, and the mate loses the fish at the boat. As we head to the dock, we take up a tip collection of \$200 for the mate, who lost our only fish. We also collected another \$500 from each man to pay the captain who did not know how to find the fish or how to keep his boat running for paying customers.



**Capt. Butch Gee from the Happy Harbor** takes his boat to Ocean City every summer. One afternoon I dropped in and had a beer with Butch at the Bahia Marina. He didn’t fish that day, but several boats were coming in and telling us how good it was that day. Butch and a couple captains and mates talked about putting a trip together for the next day. It would be short trip, just for some meat. The guys cut the meat and sell it to local restaurants. I’m invited. We left at 4 am and should be back at 11 am. Sounds good to me. It wasn’t a bad day, we did catch four nice tuna, but it took a little longer than expected. We got back at 6 pm, another 14 hour trip.

Needless to say, I love my Chesapeake Bay with our light tackle and small fighting fish. Also I should point out that I have had some good trips offshore. I was really impressed on how Harry and Kent Gessford worked as a team in landing fish. It’s not like the Chesapeake out there.



They have scales the size of a silver dollar and the thickness of a guitar pick. You must use a claw hammer to clean them. The hammer removes the scales near the dorsal fin in order to cut the meat. Drum meat, has the consistency of pork with a seafood taste. Fresh drum on the grill, basted with melted butter, salt and pepper, is delicious. I never had good luck freezing drum. It never tasted as good as fresh. Now we have these new vacuum and seal machines, which may make a difference.



**Live-Lining** for rockfish became very popular in the summer of 2006, but we had been live-lining spot for nearly a decade. Most of my live-lining was done at LNG plant near Solomons. We used spot, sometimes perch, but they don't work as well of the spot. One day I caught about 50 white perch that measured about 3 to 4 inches each. I thought these fish would be perfect, but was I wrong. I would bait the lines with these small perch and would get a bite, but the rockfish were just spitting the perch out. They wanted spot. I believe its because the perch has a strong pointy dorsal fin which sticks the rock in his mouth as he turns that fish around and scales it before swallowing it.

Live-lining is very difficult for customers who have no fishing experience. It's just like drum fishing, you have to let that fish take the bait and run before setting the hook. I had one customer bring a very large fish up to the boat, as I started to dip the net, the fish spit out the spot and swam away. He was just holding it with his month. Some captains (from Solomons) would not let their customers catch live-line fish. They put out the rod, hook the fish and give the rod to the customer to reel in. We always taught our customers how to catch and we still lost a lot fish, but at least our customers were catching their own fish.



**Ocean Fishing**—I have never really been a big fan of off shore fishing. To me, leaving the dock at 4 am and getting back 6 pm is a damn long day for an old guy. It seems that the equipment is big and so mechanical that you are not catching the fish, but the \$1,000 reel is. My first experience was years ago, when I was invited to participate in the White Marlin Tournament for one day only, the other days were booked. At 5 am it's dark and foggy as

given point. As I started to walk, I noticed that the terrain started to decline. And soon enough I find myself in a swamp. What's a swamp doing in the middle of the White Mountains? This is not Shady Side. For the next three hours I tried to find my way around the New Hampshire Dismal Swamp. I hear the guys blowing their car horn for me. I fire off a few shells to let them know I hear them, but I still can't find a way to get to them. Finally I get back, totally soaked with sweat in 30 degree weather. The good news, I think I lost five pounds after eating Dee's 10 lb. meals.



**I can remember the** first and last time I went Sika deer hunting on the shore. After driving two hours in the rain we arrive at some predetermined location in Dorchester County. These sika deer are small like big dogs and stay in marshland areas. Also in the marshland areas are ducks. This was before they closed duck season during deer season.

On this farm, we had deer hunters and duck hunters at the same time. After four hours of walking in the mud and water up to our derrieres, we threw in the towel, and decided to go back to the western shore where we don't need hip boots to hunt deer. When get back to the car we find a Dorchester County deputy sheriff waiting for us. He asks us for licenses and our permission to hunt paper. Since we were hunting with the owner, we didn't have the permission to hunt paper. This jerk threatened to arrest us all and confiscate our guns for trespassing. I pointed out that the owner was only 200 yards away duck hunting. He said it made no difference, even if the owner was with us, we still needed written permission to hunt on that property. It's a good thing he made us unload our guns first, because this a..... ( you can fill it in) would have most likely been our first kill of the day. Even after the owner showed up, this jerk continued to lamblaste us. We left, told him to arrest us on the western shore. We never heard from him and never went Sika deer hunting again.



**After moving to Branhum Rd.** in 2003, we had many deer in the back yard everyday. I made a promise to Darlene not to shoot the does, since they were the mothers to the baby fawns.

When the bucks started to show up I got my crossbow ready, but Darlene again pleaded with me not to shoot the “Daddies.” A few days later, one of the Daddies kicked one of the babies and Darlene saw it and told me “you can kill him, he’s nasty”. About a week later I was setting at the breakfast bar in the kitchen when I see two does, being chased by a buck, run across the back yard. Not having time to get dressed, I’m still in slippers and house coat, I went into the garage, grabbed and cocked the crossbow. I then came back into the house and out the front door, where I slowly came around the garage to where the four point buck was standing, about 35 yards away, aimed and hit him perfectly with one shot. I came back into the house, got dressed and went to look for the deer, which had ran only about 100 yards.

## PART II

### *Fishin’ and Boatin’*

It seems that I have spent most of my life on or near the water, despite living in land-locked Carroll County. There was a photo of me when I was one year old standing beside “my” boat named “Kerry.” It was a 14 ft. wooden row boat, that my Dad kept on the Magothy River. The way I understood the story, my parents purchased a summer home in 1945 on the Magothy in Arnold, Md. They paid \$950 for the cottage, which set high on a hill overlooking the river. While my Dad loved the water, my mother did not. She was afraid that the house would fall into the river and she worried that I would fall into the river. After one year on the river, they sold the house for \$900. They took the \$50 loss just to



*Capt. Kerry (age 1) with his Dad on the Magothy River in his first boat.*

ware. In those states, most boats anchor up and chum with clams. In Maryland it’s a search and seek mission, with 25 to 50 boats working in a group trying to locate the school. Once you get on them you drop your line with 1/2 soft crab on a large hook. After two or three are caught by the fleet, the fish breakup and you have to find them again. This could go on for few hours or a few minutes. Drum are difficult to catch. They tend to grab the bait and hold it while they run. It takes them a few seconds to swallow the bait and the hook. Most anglers who are not experienced, want to set that hook immediately after getting a bite. You will miss that fish 9 out of 10 times. I generally fish with an open bail. I let the fish run with the line for about five seconds, then slowly set the hook and start winding.



*Our Limit of Black Drum*

It never fails, the drum show up and your best fisherman are not aboard. I remember one day we had a group of mortgage bankers, who just wanted to have a good time on the bay, catch a few fish, drink a few beers and go home. I got on the drum that day, many, many times. We hooked several, but never landed a fish. When the captain spots the fish on his meter, he tells the party to drop their lines immediately. I can remember yelling out “drop your lines” and getting this reply: “what did you say captain?”, “hold on captain, I need to put my beer down”, hey, this is like work” and “why do we have to hold the rods?” I had one party who missed so many fish, I refused to take them back until they got serious and caught some fish. I had another group with four people, including one lady, who hooked every fish. She would hook the fish and pass the rod. She had the touch.

After you catch the fish, the work begins with drum.

anchored and started to catch fish. Two more kids, two adults down heaving over the side. Still catching fish. The wife is now screaming at me and I'd had enough, I said let's pack it in, the husband says, please just one more fish, as his kid gets sick again.



**Bluefish Bonanza**—Jimmy Bruce got a new boat and invited Norm and I to go blue fishing with him. It was open boat, with plenty of room for casting. We were just south of Poplar Island on western side of the channel when we saw the birds working. We started throwing bucktails and small spoons at the breaking "Taylor" blues. The action was fantastic. Every cast produced a fish. We probably lost 20 lures to these fish, with their razor sharp teeth that will take your finger off in a second. After a few hours the fish stopped biting and we looked around the boat and we had fish everywhere, more than 90 bluefish. Many more than we needed. There's a limit now of 10 bluefish per person. We learned how to cook and eat bluefish after that trip. See our recipe section.



**Black Drum Fishing**—I have always considered myself a pretty good black drum fisherman. These big fish run from 15 lbs. to 100 lbs. Average is mostly likely about 60 lbs. The drum come up to the Stone Rock every spring to feed on soft shell crabs after their first molt. If you check your calendar, look for the full moon in the month of May. These fish usually show up within 5 days of that date, but always by Memorial Day weekend. In early May, they are at Cape Charles. They move slowly up the bay, stopping at Hooper Strait, James Island Flats, and finally the Stone Rock at the month of the Choptank River. Years ago we found them in Eastern Bay and at Poplar Island, but since the re-construction of Popular Island, the drum have stayed in the Stone Rock area.



79 lbs. of Fish

They could be here a few days or at the most three weeks. In Maryland we fish for drum different than Virginia and Dela-

get out. Today, that property would have been worth about \$2 million.

As a child and into my teens, I remember coming to Annapolis every summer. We would rent a boat at the old Severn Inn on the Severn River across from the Naval Academy. My Dad and I would crab and my mother and sister would set up a picnic table at the park across the road. We would bring the boat into the beach, have lunch and go back out again to crab.

After the Bay Bridge opened in 1954, we started to crab in Eastern Bay. We would rent our row boat at Hartge Boat Rentals, located just east of Kent Narrows. I remember in later years we had a motor, which was really fun, after all those years of rowing.

As a young child, I remember crabbing with my Dad, but he did some commercial fishing without me. He and a couple of his friends would fish for shad with nets at night and then sell the fish at the market. One time he must have caught a lot, because he was giving bushel baskets of fish away to the neighbors on Winchester Ave. in Westminster, where we lived.

We also traveled to Maryland Beach in Pasadena in the summer. I think my parents just wanted to play the slots, but the beach was great and that's where I learned to catch soft crabs with a net. We would walk in water about two to three feet, pushing the net along the bottom. Tied to our waist was a line attached in an inner tube with a basket inside. Every few minutes we would pull up the net and pull out the crabs. It's not that easy today.



**While still in Carroll County**, we did a little fishing for catfish on the Monocacy River near Taneytown. We used dough balls and fished at night. Caught some nice fish and had a good time. We also did some fishing at the Westminster Community Pond. When Todd was only 3 years old he won first place in the Kids Division in a tournament sponsored by the Jaycees at the pond. We also had a farm pond when we lived near Hampstead. We did a little fishing, but our friends used the pond more than we did.



**After we moved** to Annapolis in 1974, we got back into

boating and fishing. Our first boat was a 12 ft. Sears Gamefisher with a 5 HP air cooled engine. We put a rack on top of the car and loaded the boat and headed for the shore. With all three kids, Darlene and I put the boat over at Kent Narrows. We went out on the Chester River and did some crabbing. On the return trip into the Narrows, a passing boat created a large wave which swamped the boat. Everybody was in the water. We told Kelly and Todd to stay with the boat, but they both took off swimming for the shore, which was only about 50 yards away. Darlene followed them with Chad, who was only about a year old. I managed to pull the boat to shore, bail it out, and get it back to the car. We posted a “for sale” sign on that boat, since it was obvious that it was too small for our family.



**Our second boat** was not much larger, a 14 ft. wooden runabout with some nice old lines and a larger motor. The boat needed work, and I spent the winter sanding and varnishing this classic looking vessel. By spring, she looked good, and I knew this boat was again too small for our family, but since I only paid \$300 for the boat, I thought I could make a good profit if I sold it. I could use that money to buy a bigger family boat. I ran an ad in the Capital newspaper, asking \$1500. My first potential customer comes by to look over the boat. My daughter Kelly is with me. The gentleman asks what will I take for the boat, motor and trailer. I told him I had to have \$1400. All of sudden, Kelly says “Daddy you only paid \$300.” I quickly sent her to the house and finished the deal.



We used the money from the sale of the runabout as a down payment on our first real boat. This time we had to go to First National and get a boat loan from Dave Hancock. The boat was an all fiberglass bowrider with 120 HP Chrysler engine. It had seats in the front and rear, and would carry six or seven people. It was fast. We did our first water skiing with the boat. We kept it in the deep cove located between Edgewater Beach Sunny Side and Edgewater Beach Shady Side. There was plenty of water in the cove, but you only get out of the cove on high tide. This was the first boat that we kept in the water. Col. Busey

saying he was retired USCG and this was nothing, compared to what he had experienced. A few hours later we hear Bluechip on the radio, he’s lost and doesn’t have a clue where he his. One of Capt. Buddy Harrison’s boats got lost for about 15 hours. He thought he was in the Choptank River, but he ended up 15 miles north in Eastern Bay.

The Deale Boats fished together during that fog and helped each other out. We kept a person on the bow of the boat at all times. Coming back into the port, the creek is closed due to heavy fog. I get a call from Capt. Kevin Higgins who is waiting at the Jetty. I tell him that I don’t have radar, but Capt. Larry Thomas is coming in soon and he does have radar. I suggest we wait, but my mate Jimmy Brincefield on the bow says we can make it. Well we start in with Kevin behind me. What I didn’t realize is that there are about a dozen little boats that were waiting with Kevin. They must think I have radar. We have a parade with me leading the way. This was truly the blind leading the blind. We are going very slow in this narrow channel, Jimmy can’t see anything. My depth finder starts to drop from 6 ft. to 4, to 3, I turn the boat but we’re still in 3 ft. of water. This is great, if I run around, I have a dozen boats on my tail. Jimmy then hears a horn and yelling off our starboard bow. We head in that direction, find the Corncrib, the last buoy in the channel. There’s a boat there with a bunch of people from Skippers Pier, who came out to help us in. Everybody thought I was a hero that day, but I was just lucky.



**One last gale story.** We had an afternoon trip with about 15 people from Washington. They had their families with them. When they showed up, I told them the wind is blowing now and a gale warning has been issued. The guy in charge than asked if the fish were still biting. We had an excellent bite on the first trip and I expected to be the same on the 2nd. They had people from all over the country and most were leaving the next day. He really wanted to go rockfishing. I told them the boat was safe but it would not be a smooth ride. We took off for the Stone Rock, and it was a miserable crossing. We already had two kids sick, and one wife yelling at me and her husband for taking them out. We

will not make it, and if you do it could be worst than riding out the storm. This happened to us on the *Kelly Su*, we were in the Severn River, near the Bay, when a fast high wind storm approached. We headed for the Annapolis Harbor, got there in the middle of the storm, tried to set the anchor, which would not hold. You couldn't see five feet in front of you due to the heavy wind and rain. We were blown into a pier, making a 10" hole in the side of the boat just below the gunnel. I should have never gone in there. Lesson learned.



**I was bringing the *Kelly Su* back from Crisfield to Solomons one evening, by myself. I didn't have radar, but I have depth finder and VHF. While crossing the channel I see the storm coming, the sky is black. The VHF radio sounds out an alert from the Coast Guard "hail all mariners, a major storm is approaching with 50 mph winds. Take precautions and head for cover now." Now where in the hell am I to go. I keep on heading towards the large black cloud and finally run into a wall of rain. So thick, I can't see anything. I'm coming in the Patuxent River at the time and I know there's a channel there. I can't see the markers, so I just move forward watching my depth finder. As the water got shallow, I steered the opposite direction, when it got shallow again, I steered back. I did this for about 20 minutes and the storm seemed to pass. And there was Solomons right in front of me.**



Capt. Kerry



**After that trip I swore I was going to buy a radar unit, but never seemed to have the \$2,000 needed. During the fall rockfish season in the early 90s, we had a really, bad fog set in for three days. We had three charter boats run aground in Rockhold Creek. Capt. TJ had a couple of guys follow him out of the South River. Eight hours later they were still behind him, afraid to leave for fear of getting lost. There was a guy named Bluechip, who fished with us. He was on the radio that day and I heard him**

owned a lot with a pier in the cove. He asked me to try and sell the lot and gave me use of the pier. Late in the summer, I noticed the boat was not running right. It was slow. I changed the plugs, and gave it a tuneup, but it still ran bad. I decided I better pull the boat and let an expert look at it. When I pulled the boat, I noticed all these little bubbles on the hull. Barnacles! Nobody told me about barnacles or bottom paint. Of course the boat would not run with all of those creatures all over the place. We got the boat home and started to scrape, sand and clean. After many, many hours, we painted the bottom for the first time. After putting the boat back in the water for a test drive, we were back to full speed.



**In 1976 we moved to Edgewater and started to fish. We fished with Norm Pennington and Marty Lieberman. The boys started to fish off the community pier catching spot and white perch. Todd learned how to fillet his own fish. He would bring them home and fry them up for lunch. Todd and Chad, both got into catching live eels and selling them to local crabber Cliff Cobb. They learned how to salt the eel and bait a trot line. They also caught grass shrimp and sold them to Marty, who owned Marty's Sporting Goods.**

I remember fishing with Norm and Marty one evening in the bay. We were in a small boat, which I think Marty owned. Anyway, coming in the South River, we run out of gas. It seemed that boat after boat passed us, until finally a sailboat comes by. We explained our situation, that we are looking for a tow into the river. The guy on the sailboat says he has some gas in a small container, but he's not sure if wants to give it away. He asks if we have any money, and none of us did. He looks over sees our bluefish in a bucket. He takes the fish and we get the gas and go home. No fish, but another great day on the bay.



**As our family grew, it was time to seek a larger boat. We started to look for a small cabin cruiser. After a long search, we finally found the "*Kelly Su*," a 31 ft. Broadwater, located at the Quantico Marine Base in Virginia. The boat was out of the water on jacks when I first saw her. It was the biggest boat I had ever seen and I knew we had to have it. The boat had been setting for a**

while, and since we got it at a good price, we didn't even ask about the engine. The following week we got the boat in the water at the Occaquan River and got it registered. It floated well with no leaks. Just one problem, the engine would not start. It sounded like it wanted to start, but it just didn't happen that weekend.

The next weekend Norm came down. We changed the plugs, points, condenser, and it still didn't start. To make matters worse, we had more sidewalk supervisors than you could shake a stick at. Mostly Marines, who were just trying to help. Everytime someone would suggest something, we would try it. It seems like we got the timing and firing order really messed up. It took another two weekends to get the engine back to where we started.

Finally, I called my Uncle Emerson in Carroll County. He was a UPS mechanic and knew a lot about gas engines. He simply said we needed more cranking power and more direct gas flow. We wired two 12 volt batteries together to give us the extra power, and just took a cup of gas and poured it into the carburator while cranking the engine. It started! We needed to get the carburator rebuilt. But we had it running after a long four weeks.



**Our trip back to Annapolis** was another adventure. Our plan was to cruise down the Potomac River to Pt. Lookout on Jutland Creek. Stay the night and head up the bay the next day. Going into Jutland Creek, I ran aground and broke the shaft. Needless to say, we didn't get the *Kelly Su* to South River that weekend. It took several weeks to pull the boat and replace the shaft. Finally after two months, we are ready to go. Norm, Dave Ruel and Doug Wanko and I showed up Friday evening with case of beer and deck of cards.



*The Kelly Su*

Our plan was to leave at sunrise for home. During the evening, Dave went out on the deck to relieve himself. We then heard a splash, Dave had fallen off the gunnel into the water. We helped

had to ride out the storm, as we had in the past. There's no place to run when you are in the middle of the bay. This was fast moving storm, with rain and lighting. As the storm approaches Chad saw not one but three water spouts coming his way. The first passes another Deale boat and turns it 180 degees in about 2 seconds. Lighting then hit a boat from Chesapeake Beach, and when they think the worst of the storm has passed, a lighting bolt hits the *Darlene II*, knocking the pastor to the floor. He recovered quickly to catch a mess of croaker before returning to the dock. The boat lost most of our electronics, but still had the power (without lights or radar) to go home. A few weeks later I received a tape in the mail of the pastor's sermon the following Sunday. It was entitled divine intervention.



**South Carolina bass**—Chad went to visit his friend John in South Carolina when he was 18. He had been there a few days, when I get a phone call from him “Dad, I'm not coming home. I'm going to stay here with John and his family.” I asked “why in the world would you want to live there.” He replied “Today, I just caught an 8 lb. bass. It's best bass fishing I have ever seen. I have to stay.” After a few weeks, Chad returned home, but he still loves his bass fishing. I've tried bass fishing, but it reminds of jigging, more work than needed. Fishin' should be relaxing.



**More bad weather**, we have some real good stories to tell. I can generally fish 15 to 20 knot winds. It's not comfortable, but I think its still safe. The problems occur when you are in the middle of the bay and the wind changes from 15 to 40. In the first charter boat, we were down the bay maybe 25 miles south of Deale, when a storm with high winds came up. It was coming from the north, and the only thing we could do was to put the bow into the wind, hang on and head for home. After about hour of this torture, the wind got to my front hatch, ripping it from its hinges, and propelling it over top of the boat, landing some 100 feet behind the boat. That was scary, but thank God that's all the damage we had that day.

Some boaters want to head to a safe harbor during the storm, but that is really not a good idea. Most of the time, you

they hit the boat next them. Jerry says you need to come down now. He thinks I'm home, but I'm in Monterey, California visiting Kelly and Bob and our grandchildren. We worked everything out on the phone.



**Capt. Bill Gee** was a veteran captain who I really liked. One day, we had 12 deaf mutes on board. Bill was the captain and I was the mate. We were chumming at the hill. We always try to help our customers fish, but this day was a challenge. They could not understand me and I could not understand them. About hour into the trip Capt. Bill tells me, "Kerry, tell that guy to keep his line in the water." I looked at Bill and said "Bill, you tell him." It was a difficult day, but we did catch some fish for these guys.



**My best Captain** had to be Capt. Kenny Chase, who mated and captained. He was full time and worked everyday. He never complained. The days that I worked, he was my first mate. The trips that I didn't run, he was the captain. I think our best day was on a trip booked by an upper bay captain. We were supposed to leave the dock at 7 am, but they didn't arrive until 9 am., and once all 27 got on the boat, I was informed that they had to be back at the dock by 1 pm. I was planning on fishing the Stone Rock, about an hour away. This would leave me with two hours to fish. I already had the chum and bait cut up. I loaded them up and off we went. I'm thinking, if we get a dozen fish, we will be lucky. When I arrived at the Stone Rock, there were about 10 high roller boats, waiting for the tide to change. We started to dump the chum and within 15 minutes we caught our first rockfish. The bite had started and it got crazy for ther next hour and 45 minutes while we caught our limit of 54 legal rockfish. It was like mission impossible. The next year the same group booked with another boat. I couldn't believe it. Still can't.



**My son Capt. Chad** is an excellent fisherman. I think he has the natural sense to know where the fish are. Chad had a lot of good trips, one evening on a croaker trip to the Summer Gooses, a major storm came up on them. Chad had a church group of 15 people from Spring Grove, Pa. onboard, including the pastor and my childhood friend Grady Carter. They were anchored and just

Dave back in the boat, but he's messed up. He grabbed a piling going down and it was covered with barnacles, cutting his arms, legs and chest. We left on time, the next morning with no more mishaps. Poor Dave didn't get out of his bunk until the afternoon. He was sore, but OK.



**We really did enjoy** the Broadwater boat. It was big and laid out well. Plenty of room to move around and fish. This boat was built in 1970. The 1971-72 boats were the ones with the bad plywood. It gave Broadwater a bad name. Dave Ritchie, the builder of the Broadwater, built a beautiful solid fiberglass model in 1973, but the damage was already done. He moved his operation from Mayo to Breezy Point, where he ran the marina and slowly got out of the boat building business. In fact he built some houses after that period.



**Two of the most funniest** times on the *Kelly Su* took place within two days of each other. It was on Thursday evening that Norm, Chad and I decided to go fishing off Thomas Point Light. Not much was happening with the fish, but a storm was brewing fast. The wind came up fast and turned the boat 180 degrees. We said, it's time to go, but as we started to pull the anchor, we found that when the boat turned, the line tangled in the prop. We tried and tried to get it loose, but it was not going to happen. I then just fired up the engine and forced it into gear at 10,000 RPM until the line broke. It's a rough ride going back into the river. Norm is putting the rods away in the bow of the boat. I hit a some high waves bouncing the boat all over the place. I also made a mental note that I needed to gas up before going out again.

Unknown to me, when I hit that last wave, Norm, still in the bow, got snagged by a 19 Tony Spoon. It hooked deep into his arm just above the wrist. The problem was, the line and rod were at a place where he could not reach them. He didn't have a knife to cut the line and everytime I hit another wave, the hook went deeper. Of course, I cannot hear Norm from my station. I thought Norm must be taking a nap. Chad must have been 10 years old then. I finally sent him to bow to check on Norm. He

goes up and Norm tells him, he got hooked and to tell your Dad to slow down. Chad comes back and says, Mr. Norman says slow down. He didn't say anything about Norm being hooked. As we get near the harbor, we slow down to 6 knots and I finally hear Norm yelling at me. I go up and see the situation and cut the line. We dock and take Norm back to the house, where he tells me to back out the hook. Just like the old movies I gave Norm some of my good Old Grand Dad 100 proof bourbon, but I could not back out that hook. Finally we took Norm to Anne Arundel General and they backed out the hook and patched him up.

The following day, we had a meeting for Mid-Atlantic Sea Grant specialists, who I was working with at Mid-Atlantic Fisheries Development Foundation. Following the meeting we all went to my house for crab feast, which lasted longer than the crabs. About 8 pm, someone suggested we go for a boat ride on my boat. After too many beers, I agree. It's a pleasant evening and a nice night for a cruise on the river. After about an hour, we decide to head back. We get a mile from the dock and the engine shuts down. Of course I know the problem, I forgot to gas up. Of the 13 people on the boat, we have no cell phones. I try to use the VHF radio to contact the ship to shore operator. I get the operator, but I can't seem to find anybody with a boat to answer the phone. I call the Coast Guard, who quickly told me to drop anchor and to put a life vest on every person on the boat. I tried to explain that I didn't have an anchor, which I lost the night before and I only had 10 life jackets. They were not pleased, but they came quickly and asked if they could do a safety inspection. What they found was a case of beer, and half dozen liquor bottles. They politely asked if they could remove these items from the boat. Sure! They tied our boat to theirs and put us in our slip. The booze for the tow was worth the trip. I don't think I ever took a boat out again without the proper safety equipment and a full tank of fuel.



**During the MSSA Bluefish Tournament** one year on the old *Kelly Su*, Norm, John, and Doug Wanko were aboard. We drew numbers to see who would go first. Bringing these big fish in took a lot of effort and energy. My tackle was not the best back in those days, which made it even more difficult to bring in a big

**Don't get me wrong**, I really did enjoy charter fishing. I made a lot of friends and made a lot people happy with my catches. I think, I was lucky, because didn't have the bad parties that some captains complained about. My rates were higher and I think I got a better customer. You know, the type that didn't need to get drunk to have a good time.

I'm a morning person and I guess that was one reason why I like to fish in the early AM. I loved seeing the sun rise over the bay. I used to tell my customers, that God must have one tremendous graphics department, because every day is different, there are no two sunrises the same.



**During the years** I had some good mates and some crazy ones. I fired one on the way out of Rockhold Creek. Don't remember what the problem was, I know I turned the boat around brought him back to the dock. I had another mate walk out on me before we left the dock. I think we disagreed on the type of lures we would be using that day. Both of these guys are still my friends today, but they were serious when it came to fishing. My mates worked hard for their tips, they were the first to arrive in the morning the last to leave at night.



**My most famous mate** had to be Jimmy Brincefield, known baywide as "Capt. Jim". Jimmy worked for me on the first *Darlene II* for about two years before he purchased his first boat. This was during the early 90s when we were fishing for rockfish north of the Bay Bridge. We would pick up our parties at Sandy Point, where Jimmy would park his car right beside the bulkhead. After I saw what he was driving, a Mercedes Coupe, worth about \$80,000 back then, (today they cost over \$400,000), I told Jimmy, if you want to work for tips, you got to park that car in the back. He moved the car and the next day showed up in beatup 1965 Ford Station Wagon.



**My Captains**, Jerry, Bill, Kenny and Chad, all did an excellent job. Jerry Norton was running the boat one weekend when I get a call on the cell phone, while backing into the slip, his jacket got caught in the throttle handle, speeding up the boat until

crew. We could have gone higher, but 34 was good.



**Now came the time** to sell the 2nd *Darlene II*. I paid \$15,000, thought I could easily get my \$15,000 back, but I had spend another \$7,500 on repairs. I listed the boat for \$18,000. No takers. Lowered it to \$12,000. Nobody was interested. Took the boat to Solomons and rented a slip for a month with a for sale sign on the boat. Got some calls, but no deal. I then took her to Crisfield, and rented another slip for month on the charter pier. We didn't sell it here, but we fished her a few times in Tangier Sound. In fact that's where we introduced our two-year-old grand daughter to fishing. She loved it. It was great fishing there, catching trout, croaker, blues, rockfish, flounder, and large Norfolk spot. Finally, Jason Bowen, a high school teammate of mine, called one day and said he wanted to make me offer. He said \$7,500. I said sold. He was living up on the Magothy River, and they just wanted a boat to take a bunch of people out on the weekends. They used to hang out at the Red Eye in Kent Narrows, and used the boat to cross the bay every Sunday.



*Tyron's Big Fish on the Darlene II*



**It was 1997** when I launched the new *Darlene II* and I never realized how my life would change in the coming years. After running 60 trips a year, with the new boat we jumped to 200 trips. Many with 15 to 20 people per trip. I hired two captains, five mates, and found myself working two full time jobs, real estate and charter fishing. In fact, I lost a lot of money by not working the real estate market more than I did. I hung in there for another 8 years, and finally said in 2005 "enough is enough". We sold the boat and businss to Chad and Liz.



fish. If a fish gets foul hooked or starts to spin, just multiply the time and effort. Now put all those factors together, and its Doug's turn. He takes the rod and starts



*John Auger, Doug Walko, Capt. Kerry and Norm Pennington*

reeling. It looks like a nice fish on the corner rod, back 200 feet. As the rod and fish pull harder, Doug takes a seat in the "fighting chair." We are mid-way back in Eastern Bay, heading west to the Chesapeake Bay. We bring in all other lines, in order not to tangle the main line. It usually takes 5 to 10 minutes to bring in a fish. We are already at 20 minutes and making little progress. We keep thinking he has to be a giant fish, a money fish, a fish that will win the tournament. I start to slowly turn the boat back towards Eastern bay, making the reeling a little easier. After nearly 45 minutes, Doug lands the fish. The fish was foul hooked and just average size, not a money fish. Poor Doug is totally exhausted. He just set down and didn't say a word. We were worried about him. It took nearly a hour for him to recover. The following year I started to buy some better reels, Penn 309 level winds. That was the only way I could get Doug to go back out with me.



**After a few years** with the *Kelly Su* we decided maybe it was time for a fiberglass cruiser. We sold the *Broadwater* for a lot less than we paid, but we did find a nice 30 ft. *Pacemaker*. It was named *Aloha*, a name we decided to keep. This was our traveling boat. We got into visiting ports all around the Chesapeake Bay, including Crisfield, Solomons, Tilghman Island, St. Michaels, Rock Hall, and Baltimore. We traveled with a group of boats from the Londontown Beach III Marina, including Norm and Marti, John and Uta, Ray and Mary, Sid and Brenda, and Stan and Jean. We had some great trips, and some good stories to tell.

The problem is trying to remember them all. One of the best, was in Solomons, when Sid got into his inflatable to help guide another boat into a slip. While leaving the slip he must hit a piling with a nail sticking out, soon after Capt. Sid is quickly going down for the count. Rescue completed, a little water never hurt anyone.



**I got my Coast Guard** license while we owned the *Aloha*. I was taking business partners out fishing and chartering others in connection my job at Mid-Atlantic Fisheries. My good friend Charlie Mac from Crisfield suggested that I get my license and then I would be able to write off the boat as a business expense. Boy, was this a mistake, I should have never let the Federal government know what I was doing. I found out that you have to have boat income to write off boat expenses. I also found out that I couldn't pay myself for taking parties for Mid-Atlantic Fisheries since that would be a conflict of interest. And my tax gal says the IRS loves to audit guys like me who show a salary with a real job, and then show a 30 ft. Pacemaker, losing money.



■ **While working** at Mid-Atlantic Fisheries, my job was to promote the sale of fish to consumers. My tag on my car read "Eat Fish". Also I was working in real estate part time and my real estate customers didn't understand the tag, so I had it changed to "Go Fish". Should have kept that tag.



**A few years passed** and times had changed. My job at Mid-Atlantic Fisheries had ended and I had started full time in Real Estate. That first year was difficult, money was slow and the bills keep mounting. We didn't see how we could keep up with the payments for the *Aloha*. I tried to sell the boat, but it was the early 90s in the middle of a recession and nobody had any money. Finally after talking to the bank, we agreed on a voluntary repossession. They told me to get the boat looking good, and bring it to their yard in Baltimore. It would be auctioned off and if

*II* first. We agreed that once I sold my boat, I would give him that money for a down payment and he would hold the paper on remaining balance. Several months later in March, I sold my Lowery boat for \$10,000. Got a cashiers check and called Capt George and told him I was on my way. He said let's get together on Saturday. Ok, but on Friday night I got a call from Capt. George who says he can't sell the boat, he's going to hold it for his grandson. We were disappointed, but we understood that family comes first.



*The New Carman Darlene II*

Now we are in mess. It's March, the Rockfish season opens next month. We have parties on the books, but no boat. We spent a week traveling around the bay trying to find a boat. Finally we located a 40 ft. wooden baybuilt in Kent Island. We called this one *Darlene II* again. This was good looking boat, large rear deck and twin gas engines. The only problem, she had been setting for two years. We got her looking good, but mechanical problems plagued us for three months. We replaced the gas tanks, the carburetors, the manifolds, the batteries, the alternators, plus another 50 items I can't think of now.

After being towed in for the third time in four months, I went to Crisfield to see Ronnie Carman. I told him to build me a good boat. Ronnie had just delivered his first charter boat to Capt. Bob "Hoot" Gibson in Rockhall and was building a second one for Capt. Chuck Howes in Chesapeake Beach. He was using a wooden 46 ft. hull covered in fiberglass. It was classified as a fiberglass vessel. We gave him a deposit and made some design changes, a larger bow flare, and larger cabin. Eleven months later the new *Darlene II* ran her first charter from Cambridge, where we installed the electronics. We were rated for 34 passengers plus

soon as a fish is landed, that person would grab another pole and start winding. We had fish all over the boat, Norm is on his second turn and seems to be slowing down. All lines are now in except Norm's. He's still struggling. Everybody starts to kid him about needing help. I offer to back up the boat. Finally after about 20 minutes, we see the leader. The tandem rig has two fish on it. The first to be landed was a 28 inch rock and the second was a 44" trophy rock. We had 40 to 50 lb. of fish on that one pole. I'm glad the 40 lb. mono held. I had the big fish mounted by McGinnity in New Freedom, PA. We used him at all the shows. Today he's on Norm's family room wall.



**Broom Handle Repair**—Right after Norm got his captain's license, I was still running the first *Darlene II* and we had a two boat party out of South River. We had just passed Selby Bay when I started to hear a miss from my engine. I stopped the boat and opened the hatch to see about a foot of water in the bilge. The water was coming from an intake hose. I didn't have much time to think about the repair, mainly because a lady in the party saw the water coming in and started to go crazy on me. She was yelling and screaming that we were going to sink, I assured her that we were not, just give me a few minutes. I called Norm on the radio, "Norm, come over here." He says "what do you want?" I replied "Get over here now". You never want to say that you are broke down on the radio, since the USCG can issue fines if you don't do the paperwork. I shut down the engine, which stopped the water coming in and the bilge pumps removed most of the water. When Norm arrived, we decided that we needed to cap this hose. I couldn't find anything. Norm says "you got a broom and some duct tape." Norm stuffed that handle into the hose and taped it shut. We started the engine and went fishing. It's amazing what you have to do to keep these boats running while at sea.



**I had the boat for 8 years**, when I decided to upgrade to a larger boat. The boat *Four Daughters* was out of Kent Island, but the captain retired to his home in Baltimore. Capt. Lou Naple and I went to Baltimore to see Capt. George about his boat. It had a brand new Cummins Deisel, and was in excellent condition for a wooden boat. He wanted \$30,000, said he would sell to us for

brought a good price, my balance would be paid in full. It sounded like a plan to me, we worked hard at getting the boat ready. It looked as good as the day we purchased it. I think we owed \$15,000 on the boat, and it was worth that or more. It took about a month to hear back from the bank, and I finally got the word, that the boat sold for \$5,000. I couldn't believe it. I also found out later there is no such thing as a voluntary repossession. The credit report reads "repossession". I was set up, but there was nothing I could do about it. I just decided it was time to go to work and make some money.



**We still had a charter business**, but no boat. TJ Johnson, a charter boat captain friend of mine told me about a baybuilt that a friend of his had owned in Turkey Point. The older gentleman had passed away and his



*The First Darlene II*

wife was selling the boat. After few days of quick negotiating and borrowing \$3,000, we were the proud owners of the *Darlene II*, a 40 ft. baybuilt built by Maynard Lowery on Tilghman Island. The boat had nice lines, large deck and a nice cabin with head. It needed a paint job, and some heavy duty cleanup. When we purchased the boat, it was already named the *Darlene II*, and had been named that for about 10 years. When I showed Darlene (my wife) the boat, she said change the name. She didn't want anything that looked that bad to have her name on it. After a lot sanding, scraping and painting, she started to look like a boat. It was good six-pack charter boat. We docked in the first slip at the Happy Harbor in Deale. We ran 60 to 70 parties a year, mostly on the weekends. Our customer base was Pennsylvania. We did outdoor shows in the winter months in Pennsylvania, booking for the summer months.



**One summer we had a flounder run** in Herring Bay. I guess it was the only one I can ever remember, but we had them good for a while. One afternoon, I did not have a party and asked Darlene to join me in catching some flounder. She was never into fishing, but did like the outdoors and sun. She agreed to come, as long as she didn't have to fish. I said that was no problem. She brought a book with her and was reading on the engine box while I fished on the stern. All of a sudden I got a great hit, my rod bent over, as I set the hook to bring in this monster fish. It was a 17" flounder and as I pulled in the line, the fish just flew out of the water and landed right on Darlene's face. Our fishing trip ended quickly and I don't think Darlene fished with me again for at least 10 years.



**Before Rockfish** we had bluefish. Bluefish ruled the bay between 1985 and 1990. This was the rockfish moratorium. Rockfish season was closed. In reality, it should have closed earlier, because we caught very few rock in the early 80s. It was mostly bluefish. The Maryland Saltwater Sportsfishermen's Association (MSSA) started its first annual Bluefish Tournament in the early 80s, which was the biggest tournament on the bay back then. We had "Slammer Blues" up to 25 lbs. in the spring. Taylor Blues (4 to 5 pounds) in the summer. It was a good run, but when the rockfish came back, they took control and chased the big blues out to the ocean. You can still catch the slammer blues off Ocean City.



*Chad & Todd with a Slammer Blue*

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**Slammer Blues**—We had an early May trip on the first Darlene II with Todd, Chad and friends. The boys said "we don't need a mate Dad, we can handle it." I suggested we troll four lines, but the boys said "lets run eight, we can handle it." The first

25 lb. Slammer Blue hit the long top line and quickly proceeded to tangle all remaining seven lines. We got the fish in and it took the boys nearly an hour to untangle the lines. The rest of trip, we trolled four lines.



**The Darlene II was old**, but mechanically sound. We did replace a few engines, but that's normal for this type of business. I remember one time we replaced the carburetor with a four barrel Holly. Got the Holly in a trade for something that I can not remember. It was supposed to give me 10 to 15 more HP, which it did. It ran good at high speeds, but hardly ran at all on normal slow speeds, like trolling. One day I had six guys from Koons Ford, College Park on board and the boat conked out. These guys quickly jumped in and said "don't worry, we'll fix her." They got her fired up all right, they damn near burned the boat down. While pouring gas into the carb with a styrofoam cup which breaks in pieces with gas going into the bilge while the engine started. I grabbed the fire extinguisher and put the blaze out. I found out later that these guys were parts salesmen, not mechanics.



**During the early 1990s** we had some nice rockfish enter the bay in the fall. This trip included some friends including Norm. It had been slow most of day. I think we only had two fish. We were trolling 12 lines, most of which were tandem rigs. It's close to 3 pm and I'm getting ready to call it a day when I see some birds working in front of me. As I proceed to the spot, the first line goes off, followed by another, and another, and another, and another. All 12 lines were down. We only had six people. As



*Capt. Norm Pennington with his 44" Rock*