



## MUSINGS FROM THE MAIN MOLLUSK

The SMOCS oyster restoration program is undergoing dynamic growth that is both exciting, because it accelerates progress toward targeted levels of oyster populations, and challenging, because it requires us to change the way we manage SMOCS).

This growth will not only enable us to increase the number of SMOCS-raised oysters that we will plant this summer from 400,000 last year to 2 million, but it also enables us to accept additional oysters from the Coastal Conservation

Association and the Chesapeake Bay Foundation. We will plant hundreds of thousands oysters from both of these groups on SMOCS-prepared sites.

While this growth has energized our Board, it also requires us to revise how we manage our organization and operations. At our last meeting, the SMOCS Board agreed to:

- 1) Establish committees to conduct day-to-day operations and monitor program effectiveness

- 2) Identify Board members to chair and/or work on each committee and recruit member volunteers to help them.
- 3) Decentralize field operations by empowering reef captains and recruiting more members to help with field operations as well as program management.

The most important part of the decentralization effort is that we will be empowering members to take greater control of oyster gardening operations in their creeks.

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## LET'S GET IT DONE!

Four years ago when we held the first meeting for prospective SMOCS Board members, we hoped that within three or four years SMOCS would have enough members raising oysters to create one modest oyster reef somewhere in the Patuxent.

We figured that starting from scratch, we could enroll about fifty mem-

bers and raise approximately 50,000 oysters per year. That would be a good start and make a small contribution to cleaning up local waters.

Well, four years have passed, and SMOCS has grown beyond our wildest dreams. Already, we have over one hundred fifty members, many of whom are raising oysters. Last year, we deposited

approximately 400,000 year-old oysters on eight different sites. We also accepted several hundred thousand additional oysters from folks participating in oyster raising efforts with CCA.

Local businesses and members have contributed generously, allowing the program to acquire and store shell for the construction and expan-



**Happy spring from everyone at SMOCS. We look forward to seeing you out on the water this summer!**



**SMOCS Board Members:**

Len Zuza,  
*President*

Matt Regan  
*Vice President*

Karen Zuza,  
*Secretary*

Dom Raino,  
*Treasurer*

Jennifer Bevan-Dangel

Jon Farrington

Robert Willey

**MUSINGS** (continued from page 1)

This will mean that residents in individual creeks will have more say in how their oyster gardening programs are run in their tributary, but it also requires a corresponding increase in members' responsibility to share the workload.

While the SMOCS Board will continue to provide liaison with officials and other programs, as well as procure and store shells and other materials vital to our program, members will assume an

increasingly more central role in actually implementing programs. This will not require a year-round commitment, but will require several weekend days in July, August and September (as determined by your reef captains) to collect, plant and restock devices to raise oysters. See "Let's Get It Done!" for more information on volunteers.

If we can build on the excellent volunteer support that we have re-

ceived from you in the past, SMOCS will not only be able to accelerate progress toward our goal of 3.5 million live oyster in Solomons Harbor, but we will also be able to set and reach similar targets in the other creeks in which we have sites.

Our goal is to clean local waters one oyster at a time. With your help, we can ensure that those cleaner waters will be in your creek.

- Len Zuza, President

*To volunteer for any of our activities contact Matt Regan.*

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*mattregan@starpower.net*

*Phone:*  
*301-461-0100*

**SMOCS PROGRAM EXPANDS SOUTH**

Saint Mary's County now has two representatives on the board, and they are looking forward to expanding the program south!

SMOCS membership includes several members in the California and Hollywood areas of St. Mary's County, as well as the William W. Winpisinger Education and

Technology Center at Placid Harbor.

(This brings to mind a bit of trivia. What famous national radio broadcaster originated his show at Placid Harbor?)

We have established an oyster reef in the area and will now set out to expand further into St. Mary's County to put more of "Southern Mary-

land" into SMOCS. let us know of any ideas you have to recruit additional members!

(Trivia answer—Fulton Lewis Jr. featured the choir at the Hollywood Methodist Church and was broadcast at 500 radio stations at his peak. His closing line is appropriate now; "That's the top of the news as it looks from here."





## LET'S GET IT DONE! (continued from page 1)

sion of existing and new sites. The state has stepped in to help via the Marylanders Grow Oysters (MGO) program, which supplies replacement spat to our members for free.

This year SMOCS will also initiate a new program in partnership with the Solomon's Charter Captains Association and Prince Frederick Ford which will place over 1,500,000 spat on shell onto two newly constructed reefs in Solomons' Harbor.

Because of the generosity and hard work of our members and partners, our program has accelerated quickly and grown to the point where we can have a much more significant impact much

sooner than we could have dreamt possible.

This success, however, poses a challenge to SMOCS. As the saying goes, "sometimes when the gods want to punish you, they answer your prayers." We are becoming more dependent than ever on your help.

To manage our critical volunteers more efficiently, SMOCS is creating a more de-centralized structure for field operations led by an Operations Committee consisting of one or two board members and Reef Captains from each reef site.

The Reef Captains will be responsible for coordinating spat distribution and oyster planting operations for their site.

For some of you, this is no change in what you have always done. For others, it will require just a bit more organizing, but the Board will work with you to help.

Matt Regan will contact some of you individually to serve as reef captains, but please contact him to volunteer! Ideally we would have two captains for each reef site, so volunteer if you can.

Our program is taking off, reinforced by good news in 2010 regarding diminished oyster mortality in the Bay. If we keep at it for a few years, we have an excellent chance of creating numerous self-sustaining populations of native oysters in our local waters. Let's go get it done!

*"Sometimes, when the gods want to punish you, they answer your prayers."*

## MORE WAYS TO GIVE

SMOCS' success rests on the work of our volunteers and the support of our members. We want to make your continued support of your oyster restoration efforts easy.

On the SMOCS website you will see a new addition – the ability to easily donate to our efforts via a secure pledge site.

Look for the "Click and

Pledge" icon, which will bring you to the site where you can contribute needed funds to build and stock oyster reefs in local creeks.

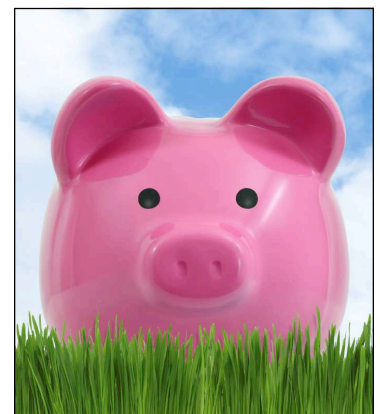
SMOCS has little overhead. We have no paid staff, no fancy offices, and use our own computers!

We have benefited from your generosity in the past and thank you all for

helping us. Please keep us in mind in the future.

Not everyone can volunteer physically or has the time during a busy summer to devote a weekend to SMOCS. But volunteers and non-volunteers alike can help in other ways.

Your contributions – of all kinds – are always greatly appreciated.





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*Cleaning local waters...one oyster at a time.*

**Are you a SMOCS  
supporter?  
Renew your  
membership  
today!**

## IT'S TIME TO ROLL

With the arrival of spring, we are past the danger of a hard freeze at low tide and it's time to reactivate your BOCSes and reset your MGO cages.

**BOCSes** If you winterized your BOCS last fall as we suggested, it's very easy to reactivate the tide turner. Simply reattach the handle of the line to your dock and roll the clock weight back into the water. That's it!

But there are two things that you might want to

do to make your BOCS operate more efficiently.

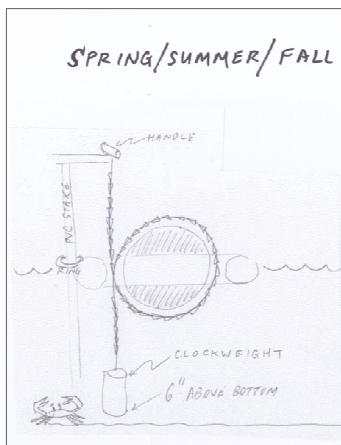
Scrape the barnacles off of your piling or PVC pipe so that the collar that retains the BOCS frame will slide more easily up and down.

One of our members, Al Sensenbaugh, also suggests adding another line to the clock weight that does not go around the cage. This way if the tide turner line breaks, you can retrieve the weight without having to go into the water. It's a simple

addition that can save you aggravation.

**MGO Cages** This change is a lot easier. Raise your cage from near the bottom of your creek to within two feet of the surface of the water at high tide and reattach the line to your dock. That's it—nothing more complicated than that.

It's no problem if your oysters are exposed to the air occasionally at low tide. They're used to that!



Reactivate the tide turner on your BOCS to get ready for spring!