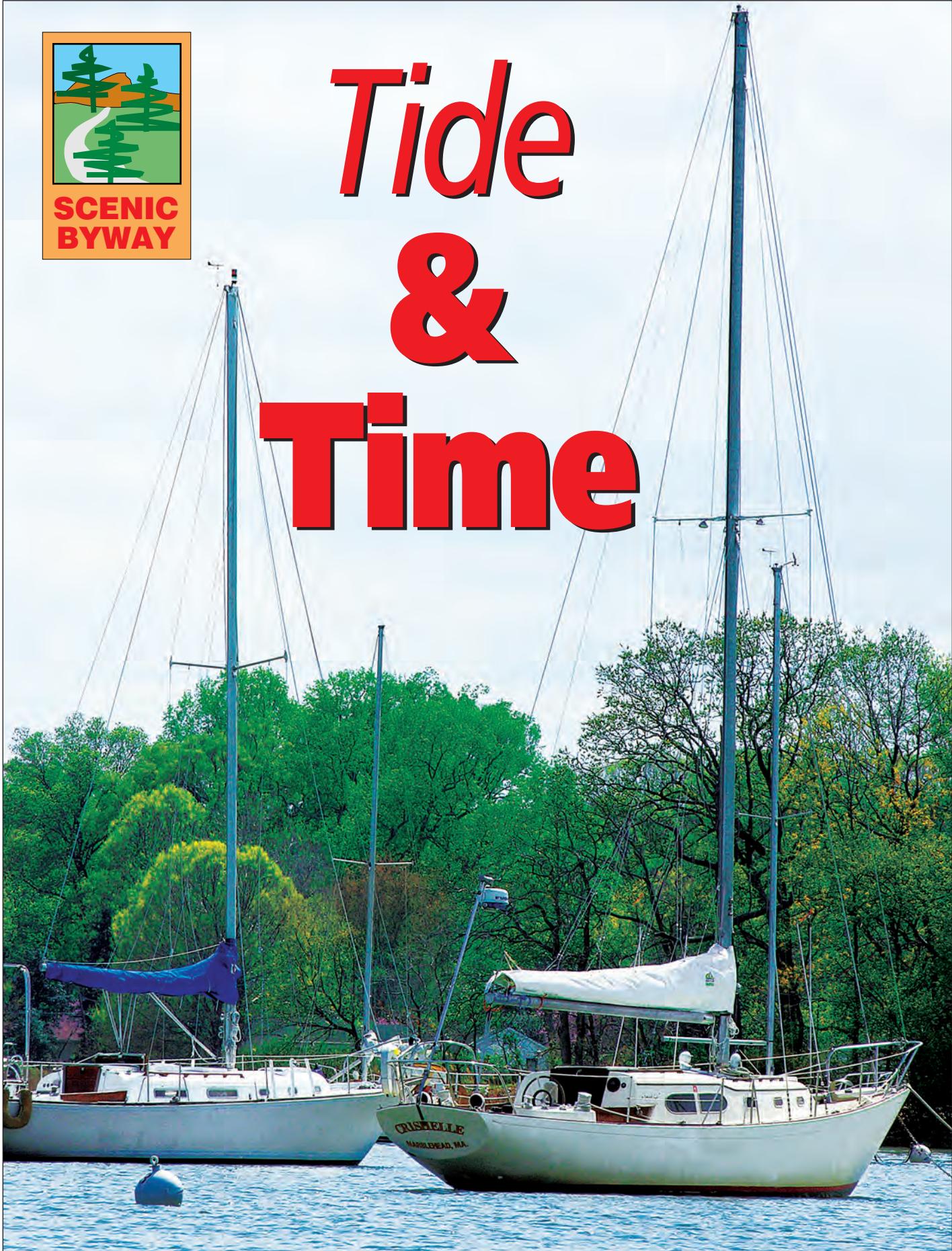




Tide & **Time**



Motorhoming Maryland's Anne Arundel County, where all roads east lead to water

■ ROSS HUBBARD



PHOTO: MARYLAND OFFICE OF TOURISM



Just minutes away from the hurried pace of Baltimore, Maryland, and Washington, D.C., sits an area of historic towns and quiet villages where time is marked less by hands on a watch as by the passing of the tides. This peaceful waterfront region of central Maryland is best explored on the Anne Arundel Colonial Tour Scenic Byway, a route that follows the western shore of the Chesapeake Bay. Though the byway

is only a 40-mile-long loop, it shouldn't be rushed; my wife, Eileen, and I spent three days exploring lanes and roads first worn as Native American trails and later hand-dug by early settlers — all connecting to Chesapeake Bay.

The bay has been described by many as what it was, and still is: a fish and shellfish factory, producing 500 million pounds of seafood each year. In colonial times, the bay was teeming with rockfish, shad, bluefish and huge sturgeon. Later, shellfish beds full of oysters reportedly as large as dinner plates were so thick in the bay that ships sometimes ran aground.

This bounty is what attracted Captain Salem Avery, a waterman from Long



Sailboats await their owners' return on the West River (opposite page). A tranquil stop along the Anne Arundel Colonial Tour Scenic Byway is the Galesville waterfront (top). Our tour guide, Squire Frederick Dukesbury Taylor, describes the Chase-Lloyd House, a three-story Georgian town house in Historic Annapolis (above). Future Naval officers assemble in front of Bancroft Hall at the United States Naval Academy (left). Steamed crabs, fresh from the Chesapeake Bay, are a Maryland delicacy (left, top).

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MAP ILLUSTRATION: SUE CARLSON

Island, New York, to the bay during the oystering heyday (1850-1930). During this time, the oyster fueled growth throughout the region and oyster-fishing fleets of sail-powered boats covered the bay. As a “buy boat” captain, Avery purchased oysters from other watermen and sailed the shellfish to market in Baltimore. Local boat building flourished, and oyster-packing houses started to spring up as boats moved large quantities of shellfish to market quickly. To this day, you can still find piles of oyster shells several feet thick on land.

You can also find many restored sites that underscore the region’s colorful past, including the home Captain Avery and his wife and seven children shared. Located along the byway in the village of Shady Side, the house sits on a peninsula bordered by the West River and the Chesapeake Bay. A true waterman’s home, the Captain Salem Avery House has been preserved as a living-history museum — complete with period furnishings, historic boats and models, fishing equipment and collections of oral histories from local families.

Although the quantities of fish and shellfish have declined over the years, the region still harvests crab

The two-acre pleasure garden at the William Paca House and Garden in Annapolis features a domed pavilion and Chinese trellis bridge (below). Lord Mayor’s Tenement, a reconstructed earthfast structure built with early tools and natural materials, is an important educational aid at Historic London Town and Gardens (opposite, top). The cobblestone streets of Annapolis are lined with more surviving colonial buildings than any other city in the United States (opposite, middle).



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ing them to mature and then be reintroduced into the Chesapeake Bay.

With only one road in and one road out, the friendly village of Galesville is a slice of Americana. We parked our motorhome at the Galesville Park and County Wharf and walked to the Hartge Yacht Yard on Church Lane, home of one of the oldest working boatyards on the bay. A one-room nautical museum — housed in the original 1878 family manor — traces the history of Henry Hartge, a cabinetmaker and piano manufacturer from Germany who parlayed his woodworking skills into a successful family business designing and building yachts and watermen's boats.

Looking out from the grounds onto the sparkling waters of the West River and the yachts peacefully moored



Bay Dreams

The Chesapeake Bay — the largest estuary in North America — is roughly 195 miles long, with an average depth of 21 feet. Along with its tidal tributaries, it totals more miles of shoreline than the entire West Coast of America. The bay was formed some 15,000 years ago, as glacial ice sheets melted and flooded the ancient Susquehanna River Valley.

The headwater of the bay is the Susquehanna River, which extends north into Pennsylvania and New York, changing from river to creek to stream. Although most of the bay is in the state of Maryland, the entire watershed includes six states: Delaware, Maryland, New York, Pennsylvania, Virginia and West Virginia. The bay meets the Atlantic Ocean at Norfolk, Virginia, and the lower leg of the Delmarva Peninsula at Virginia's eastern shore. The water in the lower bay is salty; as it travels north, the salty water mixes with fresh water from the bay's tributaries, creating brackish water. Many of the bay's rivers are deep and navigable — making it a dream destination for boaters and fishermen. — *R.H.*

and fish, but few oysters. Across the West River in Galesville, Captain Jack Smith is helping the native oysters make a comeback. We met Captain Jack and his wife, Barbara, at their waterfront home for a cruise on the local waters. A character as salty as the bay itself, Captain Jack is an 80-plus-year-young native of Galesville and an expert on the area's history and ecology. His property, in fact, is landscaped with native water- and land-grasses and plants and features a stand he built for the ospreys, the native "fishing eagle," which nest above the water on trees and river markers. Captain Jack raises baby oysters in a protective enclosure at his dock, allow-



PHOTO: MARYLAND OFFICE OF TOURISM

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there, we found it hard to imagine that Galesville was once a bustling 17th-century port for one of the state's most important exports — tobacco.

North of Galesville, in the community of Edgewater, historic London Town thrived from the late 1600s through the mid-1700s as a tobacco-inspection station. Originally 100 acres, the town of London was established in 1683 as a port of entry and served as an important crossing point for colonial travelers journeying from Williamsburg in the south to Philadelphia to the north. Currently, archaeologists from the Lost Towns Project are excavating this 300-year-old village — now known as Historic London Town and Gardens — unearthing fence lines, foundations and cellars of the buried seaport.

According to our tour guide, Vickie Lerch, the lost town of London is the largest ongoing archaeological project in Maryland open to the public. Three Saturdays a year, the public is invited to dig in and help uncover historical artifacts during Archaeology Dig Days. Guided tours of the William Brown House, a *National Historic Landmark*, are available, as are self-guided tours of London Town's woodland garden — where bark pathways lead through eight acres of peaceful woods, native and exotic plants, 60 specimens of magnolia trees and incomparable views of South River.

Just minutes north of London Town is Annapolis, the most well-known port along the scenic byway. Annapolis is best experienced on foot, so we parked our motorhome at the Navy-Marine Corps Memorial Stadium parking lot, where RV parking is easy, inexpensive (\$10 for the day) and comes with a free ride into downtown on one of the frequently running buses. Within five minutes, we were at the visitors center in the middle of historic Annapolis, ambling along the same cobblestone streets and lanes that George Washington, James Madison and Thomas Jefferson once walked.

Annapolis, which became the capital of Maryland in 1695 and served as our nation's first peacetime capital from 1783 to 1784, is rich with historic attractions. Boasting more surviving 18th-century buildings than any other city

in the United States, the entire Colonial Annapolis Historic District is a designated *National Historic Landmark*.

The countless statesmen and influential people who called the area home reads like a “who's who” register. In fact, four of the signers of the Declaration of Independence — Charles Carroll, Samuel Chase, William Paca and Thomas Stone — lived in Annapolis. All of their homes have been preserved and three of them (the Charles Carroll House, the Chase-Lloyd House and the William Paca House and Garden), are open to the public.

Surrounded by so much history, don't be surprised to see colonials strolling through town — they're part of the “Walk With the Colonials” tour. Watermark Tours offers a variety of guided historic walking tours; we chose the 90-minute Colonial Stroll, and as soon as it started we knew we were in for a treat. Our friendly guide introduced himself, in proper colonial dialect, as Squire Frederick Dukesbury Taylor. Dressed in period attire and with colonial mannerism, Squire Fred described his station in life as a colonial tailor and told us of the interesting comings and goings of the townsfolk, statesmen and dignitaries of his day.

Squire Fred escorted us through the Maryland State House to see, what he termed, the “bigwigs” at work. “The more important the person was, the higher their wig was piled atop their head,” he said. Squire Fred, a 64-year-old historian and one of the most recognizable people in town, peppered our tour with liberal doses of good humor that we affectionately dubbed, “Squire Fredisms.” Built between 1772 and 1779, the State House is the oldest one in continuous legislative use and is topped with the largest wooden dome in the country. Again, history nearly dripped from its varnished walls. It was here that the Treaty of Paris was ratified, Jefferson was appointed Minister to France, and George Washington resigned his commission as Commander-in-Chief of the Continental Army.

From the State House, we strolled across the street to St. John's College, a liberal-arts institution known for its “great books” curriculum. Founded in 1696, it is the third-oldest college in



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the United States. The alumni include Francis Scott Key and four Maryland governors. The college is situated on a hill overlooking the historic downtown of Annapolis and the Chesapeake Bay.

One block away is the Chase-Lloyd House, a finely detailed Georgian mansion built in 1769 by Samuel Chase. It was one of the first three-story Georgian town houses built in the Colonies, and boasts many examples of artistic woodcarvings and elaborate treatments.

Directly across the street is the Hammond-Harwood House. Built between 1760-1775 and designed by architect William Buckland, the home is a fine example of Colonial Georgian architecture. The five-part Georgian's scale and design so inspired Thomas Jefferson that he sketched it for his own architectural reference. The home's intricately carved front door is often referred to as "the most beautiful doorway in America." The house has been well-preserved and is 95 percent original.

Walking down King George Street, our next stop was the United States Naval Academy, founded in 1845. We were in time to see thousands of midshipmen assembled in front of Bancroft Hall to take lunch. This is no ordinary lunch line; rather, it is formal, at-attention formation and marching. The men and women at the Naval Academy represent our nation's best and brightest — each year, 12,000 students apply and only 1,200 are admitted — and to be in their presence is inspiring. At the center of the grounds is the final resting place of legendary Captain John Paul Jones, entombed in a crypt in the U.S. Naval Academy Chapel, a beautiful building with incredible Tiffany stained-glass windows.

Rounding out our tour was a short walk to Annapolis City Dock, a hub for commerce, transportation and gathering — where Squire Fred bid us a good day, tipped his hat and disappeared into the past.

With its easy access to the bay, Annapolis is known as "The Sailing Capital of America," and while Newport, Rhode Island, may not look kindly upon this moniker, Annapolis lives

up to its lofty nickname in spirit and appeal. Many boats are available for tours around the harbor, surrounding rivers and creeks, and the bay, which is just minutes from City Dock. From here, the Chesapeake Bay Bridge is in view, as well as Maryland's Eastern Shore and Eastport, a community across the harbor.

As we made our way back to the visitors center, we passed by the Shiplap House — one of the oldest homes in town — and stopped for a visit at the William Paca House and Garden. Paca, another of the signers of the Declaration of Independence and a former governor of Maryland, built the five-part Georgian mansion



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between 1763 and 1765. The home is beautiful, but the residence is best-known for its restored two-acre pleasure garden — the only 18th-century garden of its kind in the state.

While the byway officially ends (and begins) in Annapolis, we continued 15 minutes north to our base camp in Millersville — the Washington D.C., NE KOA Kampground. Easily accessed from Interstate 97, the campground is set on 50 acres of rolling countryside and peaceful woodlands.

In these quiet surroundings, we enjoyed a restful night's sleep.

The next day, we headed out for our last taste of the bay — a true Maryland crab feast. Newspaper-covered picnic tables overflowed with bright-red steamed crabs, platters of corn-on-the-cob dripping with butter and pitchers of ice-cold beer.

Late afternoon gave way to

evening and the air filled with fireflies and laughter. As we enjoyed our meal, we reflected on our visit — the people, places and the relaxed life on the bay, all woven into a beautiful tapestry. It is easy to understand why Maryland is known as the land of pleasant living; the undercurrent of history and the ebb and flow of life here are to be savored ... slowly. ■

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