

**For Immediate Release**

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Chincoteague Chamber of Commerce

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**CHINCOTEAGUE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE ANNOUNCES WINNERS  
AT 40<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL EASTER DECOY & ART FESTIVAL**

**Chincoteague VA—April 23, 2019:** The Chincoteague Chamber of Commerce Easter Decoy & Art Festival is celebrated as a rite of spring on the Eastern Shore of Virginia. Fine art, carvings, jewelry, sculpture and other artisan crafts were showcased by over 80 exhibitors at the two day festival over Easter weekend.

People's Choice Award for Best Carver was awarded to Chincoteague native Cork McGee for the second year in a row. An island native for 88 years, Cork began carving hunting rigs for his guided trips hunting ducks and geese. He mentored under Cigar Daisey since he was a frequent visitor in Cigar's shop. Cork's family lived on Assateague Island for many years where his father was a waterman and his mother took care of the home and children.

People's Choice Award for Best Artist was awarded to Yvonne Torelli, a self-taught oil painter residing in Laurel, DE. Yvonne was a social worker for many years while developing her style and perfecting her craft. Yvonne says she paints what she loves. That includes landscapes of Assateague Island and the Chesapeake marsh, sport fish, turtles from her backyard turtle sanctuary and birds from neighboring woods. Yvonne won the award in 2015 and 2017 as well.

Best Photograph of Chincoteague or Assateague was presented to Captain Debbie Ritter for her outstanding photo of a great white egret with outstretched wing sheltering a snowy egret underneath. Debbie has studied and captured images of wildlife on the Eastern Shore of Virginia and Chincoteague and Assateague Islands for over 30 years. Her wild Chincoteague pony photographs capture the beauty of the animals, oftentimes during Spring or Fall roundups. She captains her own cruise boat under the name Chincoteague Nature Encounters. Debbie won this award in 2016 and 2018.

The Curtis Merritt Award of Excellence is awarded to an exhibitor demonstrating exemplary qualities as an artist or carver as chosen by a jury of their peers. The 2019 recipient is Carroll Lee Marshall from Sanford Virginia. He loves children and can be seen giving a miniature carving to children who visit his booth. Carroll Lee volunteers at the Saxis Island Museum and the Museum of Chincoteague Island where he does carving demonstrations. He is an active member of the Chincoteague Decoy Carvers and Artists Association and has been with the Easter Decoy & Art Festival for many years.

The Chincoteague Volunteer Fire Company was the recipient of the Pre-Loved Treasures Silent Auction and proceeds will go toward the Fire Company's Building Fund for the newly completed Station #3. Music was provided by Emily Guemple and Ric Rose from the Chincoteague Cultural Alliance. The Chincoteague Chamber of Commerce thanks the volunteers who helped with the show and all attendees and exhibitors for participating.

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[www.chincoteaguechamber.com](http://www.chincoteaguechamber.com)

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