

A Resolution to Support a
Downtown Revitalization Project:
New Theater Building

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, Leonardtown has a vital interest in maintaining and improving the economic health of its downtown area; and

WHEREAS, Chesapeake Bay Floating Theater, Inc. has embarked on project to acquire and restore the New Theater Building and to convert it to a legitimate theater and performing arts center; and

WHEREAS, the State of Maryland makes certain loan and grant funds available for revitalization projects through its Downtown Business Development Program; and

WHEREAS, the project is located in a "designated neighborhood" and is eligible for state loans and grants;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, on this 14th day of April, 1997, that Town Council of Leonardtown, Maryland, hereby endorses this project and supports the funding application for whatever amount of funds the State makes available to rehabilitate this building and establish a viable live theater in the downtown area of Leonardtown.

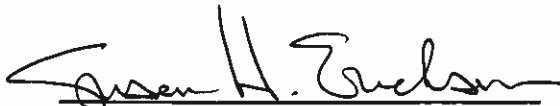
ATTEST:



Robert O. Guyther
Town Administrator



Ruth W. Proffitt, Vice-President



Susan H. Erichsen, Councilwoman



Walter Wise, Councilman



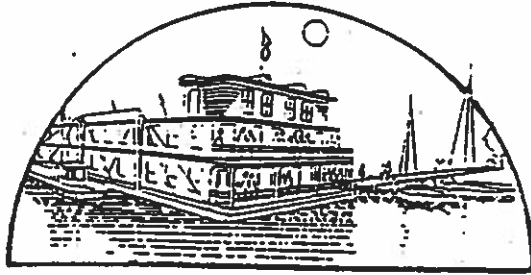
J. Harry Norris, III, Mayor



Bernard Y. Delahay, Councilman

Daniel W. Muchow, Councilman

ORIGINAL



Chesapeake Bay

FLOATING
THEATRE

James Adams, II

INTRODUCTION

Early in 1992 the Calvert County Commissioners received a grant of \$10,000 to be used to study the feasibility of a project to construct a floating theatre which would operate on the Chesapeake Bay and adjacent Maryland waterways. The idea for the project was initiated by Mr. Spike Parrish, a theatre professional and resident of Calvert County. It was his interest to recreate the concept of a floating theatre as existed in the early part of the twentieth century in the *James Adams Floating Theatre*.

The grant to the County was conditional upon matching expenditures equal to or greater than the State's \$10,000. A volunteer team consisting of Mr. Parrish, Non-Profit Art's Consultant Caroline Seaton-Lyon, and Marine Architect John W. Boylston conducted as an in-kind contribution, a planning study of potential docking facilities and estimated construction and operating costs. Mr. Boylston prepared preliminary design and estimated construction costs. Mr. Parrish and Ms. Seaton-Lyon identified and profiled over 60 possible ports-of-call for the theatre once completed. Using the information supplied in this study the County selected the consulting firm of Basile Baumann Proust & Associates, Public/Private Development Advisors to complete the economic feasibility study.

On January 12, 1993, the consultants submitted their final report in which they concluded that such a project is feasible and recommended that it be implemented. On January 14, 1993, organizers met in Prince Fredrick, Maryland and approved the Articles of Incorporation of the Chesapeake Bay Floating Theatre, Inc., incorporated as a private, non-profit corporation under Section 501 (c) 3 of the Internal Revenue Code of the United States. On February 1, 1993, the Articles of Incorporation were accepted and approved by the State of Maryland Department of Assessments and Taxation.

Recognition of Tax-Exempt Status as a Sec. 501(c)3 corporation has been approved by the Internal Revenue Service. Construction funds will be sought from foundation grants; corporate sponsors; private donors; and other fund raising activities. Federal and State sources will also be explored to the extent that they may become available.

While Calvert County has taken the initiative in introducing the project, and although the homeport is planned to be in Solomons, it is intended and envisioned that the floating theatre will be considered to be an important cultural resource and tourist attraction for the entire State of Maryland and markedly for those counties and cities having water access to the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries.

Theatre operations will be supported from revenues. A four person administrative staff will manage fund raising and theatre business, while play production will be executed by an artistic group and production company. Plans contemplate a minimum 35 week professional season with the theatre becoming a community resource while in the home-port.

The vessel will be named the *James Adams II*, in recognition of the historical significance of the *James Adams Floating Theatre* and the tradition of its 27 year existence.

HISTORY OF THE ORIGINAL *James Adams Floating Theatre*

The following is taken, in part, from the book The James Adams Floating Theatre, by C. Richard Gillespie:

The James Adams Floating Theatre, the only showboat to play for any length of time on the East Coast of the United States, was built in Washington, North Carolina, in 1913-14 and burned in the Savannah River in Georgia in 1941. For some twenty-seven years in between, the showboat brought the exciting experience of live theatre to countless audiences at well over a hundred landings---primarily in Maryland, Virginia, and North Carolina.

Plying the waters of the Chesapeake for over a quarter of a century, the boat on which Edna Ferber based her famous novel brought excitement and entertainment to isolated small towns up and down the East Coast in early twentieth-century America---the Chesapeake Bay being a major port-of-call.

The builder of the boat, James E. Adams, was a farmer from Michigan who taught himself to be a circus aerialist. He started and prospered with his own carnival company, and later, when retirement proved boring, decided to build himself a showboat. The boat was a success, for Adams operated it to attract the same audiences he had enticed in his previous business ventures.

The showboat's intriguing history includes fires, sinkings, a shooting, arrests, and even several deaths. The Floating Theatre was also an integral part of the repertoire theatre movement of the early twentieth-century. The history of that movement, with its own playwrights, performers, and organization, is only now being explored.

Chesapeake Bay Floating Theatre, Inc. plans to recreate, as nearly as possible, the original James Adam's interior and exterior by integrating early twentieth-century design with modern technology. The historical image will be further promoted by naming the vessel the James Adams II. Her presence in the Bay will not only make available quality theatre to all sectors of the population, but will also help to stimulate the economy and promote tourism throughout the Chesapeake region.

The concept of a floating theatre was a success then and no doubt will be a success today, once again performing an important role in the culture of the Tidewater area.

MAJOR COMPONENTS OF THE PROJECT

The following describes the range of activities and use of theatre space to generate income and stimulate public response:

Theatre Exterior

The exterior of the superstructure will be an invaluable device for intriguing and drawing segments of the public who would either not consider being members of an audience, or otherwise not be aware of the theatre's existence .

A base coat of white will be accentuated with bright, contrasting colors on trim work. Lettering will be of a style in keeping with the early part of the century and "Chesapeake Bay" as well as "James Adams II" will be prominent on the port and starboard topsides of the upper decks. Polished brass fittings and trim work will accentuate the overall effect.

Flagstaffs with banners will be affixed to the upper deck. If corporate names are displayed, these banners could become a valuable source of revenue.

A power driven calliope, or a recording of a calliope, will play as the barge is towed up a river and into port. The sound of the calliope combined with the visual impact will produce an effect of excitement, anticipation, and curiosity.

Theatre Production

A 35-week season will consist of three productions. If the season is extended an additional production could be feasible. The genre will be light comedies and musicals. All major roles will be played by professional actors selected through open auditions. Minor roles could be held, depending on the play, by members of the surrounding community where the theatre is berthed. This practice will allow local residents to become a part of the project as well as increase audience attendance.

A typical booking will consist of:

- 1 - 2 Day Booking: one of the three productions*
- 3 - 5 Day Booking: two of the three productions*
- 6 - 8 Day Booking: all three productions*

*One performance of a specified play in a twenty-four hour period, however, two performances of the same production could be negotiated upon request, i.e., matinee and evening, or two evening.

Children's Theatre

Three children's productions will be mounted each season (above reference to major and minor roles applies). A children's theatre matinee will be held on each Saturday the theatre is in port. Sunday matinees could be negotiated on an individual basis. The repertoire will be made up of published children's playwrights, however, it is conceivable that an annual contest could be initiated through the Art's Council for the best original children's play in the State of Maryland and the winner would have his/her play mounted and run as part of the theatre's season.

***Foyer**

Most of the available portion of wall space will be utilized by displaying the theatre's on-sale prints and line drawings, as well as professional artist's oil paintings, water colors, and prints obtainable on a commission basis. The remaining area will display tributes awarded those individuals who have contributed to specific categories in the theatre's fund raising activities and success.

A video tape could run continuously while the public is on board, excluding on-stage performance time, educating and enlightening the community to the significance of the Chesapeake Bay as a natural resource, the gravity of ignoring the impact of pollution and mismanagement of these waters, and informing individuals what they might do to assist in the cleaning up and maintenance of this remarkable, fragile ecosystem. The tape(s) would be supplied by agencies, public or private, who would be interested in such a project

***Gifts**

A gift counter will be located in the foyer offering items for sale such as; Richard Gillespie's book The James Adams Floating Theatre, prints, line drawings, mugs, T-shirts, etc.

***Mezzanine of History**

Space will be designated to commemorate the history of the original James Adams Floating Theatre and the marked role it played in the culture of the Tidewater area. Items would be on loan from the Chesapeake and Delaware Canal Museum, Chesapeake City, Maryland and the St. Michaels Maritime Museum, St. Michaels, Maryland.

***Guided Tours**

Guided tours will be conducted by members of the cast and crew as part of the duties outlined in their contract. Tours will take place at regular, posted intervals each day the theatre is in port.

Refreshments

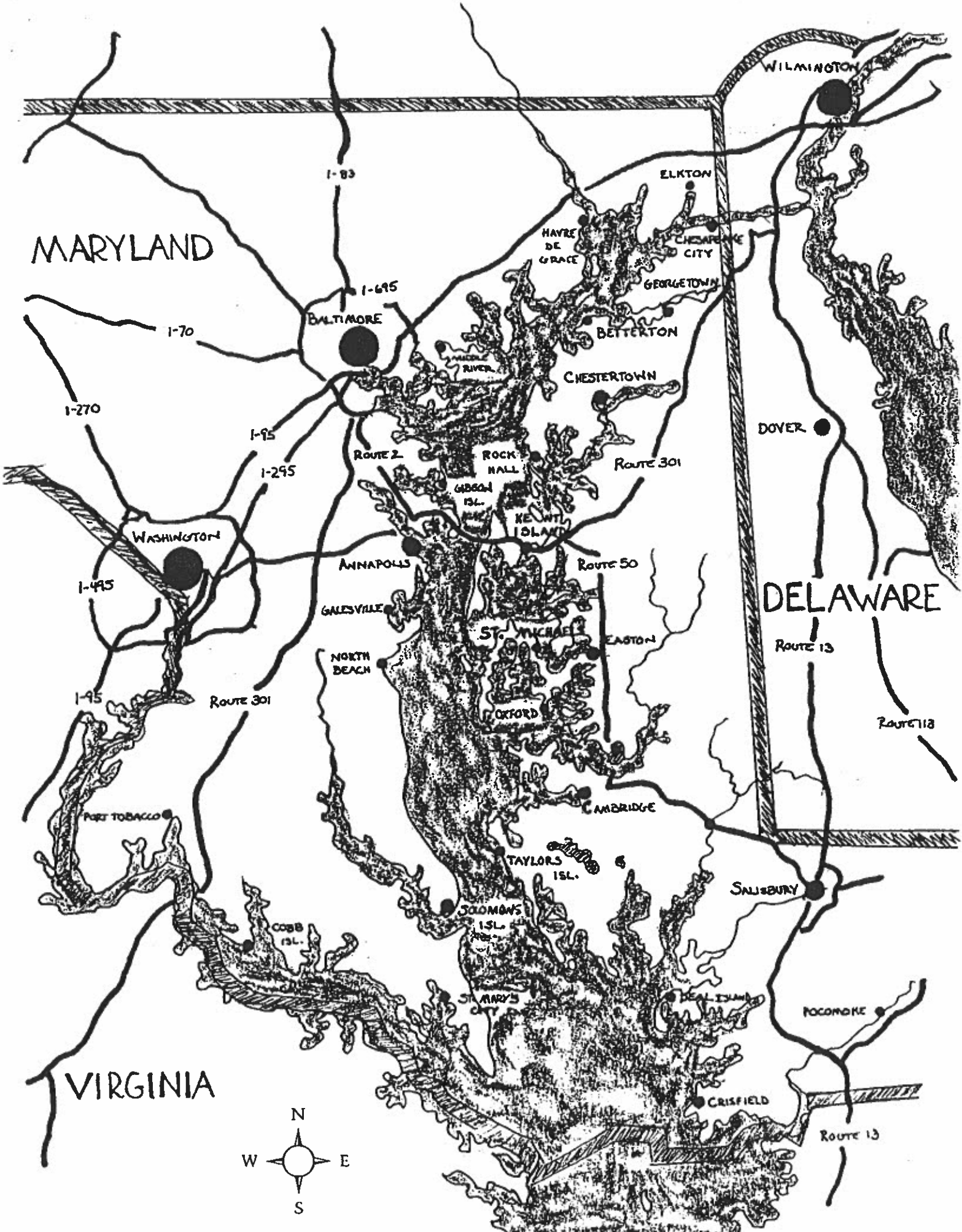
Soft drinks, snacks, and coffee will be on sale in an appropriate portion of the foyer.

* It is assumed and understood that the interior design and decoration of the theatre will be in keeping with the early part of the twentieth-century, thereby replicating as is feasibly possible, the atmosphere of the original James Adams.

**TABLE 12
PROTOTYPICAL VENUE**

<u>Week</u>	<u>Month</u>	<u>Region</u>	<u>Port</u>	<u>Class</u>	<u>Event</u>
1 & 2	March	II	The Boat House Restaurant, Dowell	B	
3	March	I	Historic St. Mary's City, St. Mary's	B-A	Possible
4	March	XII	Port of Salisbury Marina, Salisbury	B	
5	April	XI	Taylor's Island Marina, Taylor's Island	C	
6	April	X	Chesapeake Maritime Museum, St. Michaels or Tilghman Island Inn, Tilghman	D D	
7	April	IV	Herrington Harbor, Friendship	B	
8	April	IX	Harris Crab House, Grasonville	D	
9	May	V	City Dock, Annapolis	A	Yes
10	May	V	Mike's Crab House, Riva	A	
10	May	V	Riverdale Inn, Severna Park	A	
11	May	VIII	Public landing, Chestertown	B-A	Possible
12	June	VIII	Grannery Restaurant, Georgetown	B	
13	June	VI	Inner Harbor, Baltimore	A	
14	June	VI	River Watch Restaurant, Baltimore County	A	
15	June	VI	Wild Duck Cafe, Baltimore County	A	
16	July	VII	North East Park, North East	C-B	Yes
17	July	VII	Public Dock, Chesapeake City	B	
18	July	VIII	Public Landing, Betterton	C	
19	July	VIII	Rock Hall Harbor, Rock Hall	D	
20	August	VI	Combination of 3 locations in the City & County	A	
21	August	VI	Combination of 3 locations in the City & County	A	
22	August	V	City Dock, Annapolis/Mike's Crab House, Riva	A	
23	August	V	Chesapeake Harbor Marina/Quiet Waters Park	B	
24	September	IV	Pirates Cove or Steamboat Landing Rest's., Galesville	B-A	Possible
25	September	X	Chesapeake Maritime Museum, St. Michaels or Tilghman Island Inn, Tilghman	D-C	Possible
26	September	XI	Suicide Bridge Restaurant, Secretary	C-B	Possible
27	September	XI	Taylor's Island Marina, Taylor's Island	C-B	Possible
28	October	II	Solomons Area	B-A	Possible
29	October	II	Solomons Area	B-A	Possible
30	October	II	Solomons Area	B-A	Possible

Source: Basile Baumann Prost & Associates, Inc.



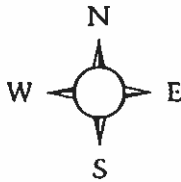
MARYLAND

WILMINGTON

DELAWARE

MARYLAND

VIRGINIA



I-83

I-695

I-70

I-270

I-95

I-295

I-495

I-95

BALTIMORE

WASHINGTON

ANNAPOLIS

GALESVILLE

NORTH BEACH

PORT TOBACCO

ROUTE 2

ROCK HALL

GIBSON ISL.

KEWITT ISLAND

ROUTE 301

ROUTE 50

ST. MICHAEL

EASTON

OXFORD

CAMBRIDGE

TAYLORS ISL.

SOLOMONS ISL.

ST. MARY'S CITY

DEAL ISLAND

CRISFIELD

ELKTON

HAYRE DE GRACE

CHESAPEAKE CITY

GEORGETOWN

BETTERTON

CHESTERTOWN

DOVER

ROUTE 13

ROUTE 118

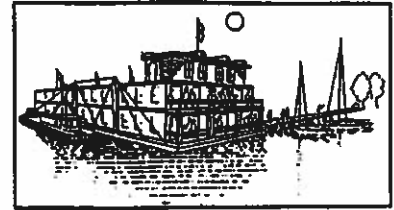
SALISBURY

POCOMOKE

ROUTE 13

Chesapeake Bay Floating Theatre

"James Adams II"



P.O. Box 201
Dowell, Maryland 20629

410/326-2745

President: Spike Parrish ◊ Secretary: Joseph F. Mitchell, Esq. ◊ Treasurer: Capt. John G. Bailey ◊ Richard H. Fischer
Evelyn S. Hungerford ◊ Mary Ann Murray ◊ Lenny Schwartz ◊ Herman Schieke ◊ John C. Smith ◊ C. Robert Spedden

UPDATE--January 1997

Dear Supporter of the Floating Theatre Project:

The project is alive and well. The Board of Directors is committed to the eventual launch of the James Adams II. However, a new and exciting opportunity is available to provide a land based facility for the James Adams II Acting Company and to support our ultimate goal of a floating theatre.

Your past support has been very important. We, the Board of Directors, hope that you will continue to support our project and that the new opportunities will excite you as much as they do us.

Sincerely, Spike Parrish, President.

Theatre Barge: As announced in April, the barge Norge, donated back in 1993 to be renovated and converted to the James Adams II, had to be disposed of because of bottom deterioration. We were fortunate to be able to dispose of it with no cost to the project.

Maryland State Loan: The State loan which had been expected to provide the funds to renovate the bottom and exterior of the barge failed to materialize as originally promised. That failure necessitated disposal of the barge.

Challenge Grant: The Challenge Grant which was awarded by the Maryland General Assembly at the 1995 session is still alive. An amendment will be sought in the 1997 session to extend its term and conditions.

Coffee Cabaret at Calvert Marina: Very successful performances of *A Salute to the USA*, *Love Letters*, *I Ought to be in Pictures*, *Last of the Red Hot Lovers*, *The Gift of the Magi*, *Shirley Valentine* and *On Golden Pond* were presented.

The Leonardtown Project: A contract has been negotiated to purchase the building in Leonardtown known as "Ye Olde Restaurant and Apartment Complex." The property includes an excellent restaurant facility, seven apartments, and a motion picture theater. All are in good condition and a commercial

appraisal has been obtained. The theater contains 350 seats and can be effectively converted to a live performing arts facility. The theater would provide a year round facility for our performances. It is located on the Square in Leonardtown, up the street from a major port of call of the original James Adams Floating Theatre. We have been assured of approval of a Neighborhood Business Development Program (NBDP) loan from the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development. Leonardtown has been designated by the State as a Neighborhood Revitalization Area which makes this loan possible.

When the property is acquired, Chesapeake Bay Floating Theatre, Inc. (CBFT) will continue the restaurant and apartments and make the necessary additions and changes to convert the movie theater into a fully equipped performing arts center. The restaurant can provide a good place to go for dinner and then the theatre or for the theatre and then dessert. This theater will be the home of the James Adams II Theatre Company. When the floating theatre is launched, the company will perform at this location during the winter months and in the summer the theatre will be used for Summer Stock performances.

Floating Theatre: The Board of Directors of CBFT is committed to the ultimate goal of recreating The James Adams Floating Theatre and to bring live theatre to ports of call around the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries. To that end, the Maryland General

Assembly will be asked to extend the Challenge Grant approved in the 1995 session which is scheduled to expire on June 30, 1997. We hope for a date in 1999. Efforts will continue to find a suitable deck barge for conversion to the **James Adams II**.

We need your help now: A careful financial analysis of the income and expenses of the operating restaurant and apartments in the Leonardtown Complex has been made. They are currently self-supporting and should be able to make a significant contribution toward the overhead costs of the facility. It is recognized that it may take time for the conversion of the theatre to be completed and for it to become self-supporting. In order to qualify for the Neighborhood Business Development Program loan necessary for the purchase to go ahead, the Corporation must have a minimum cash equity. This can be in the form of pledges of funds contingent upon receipt of the loan. Because of this we must ask for your help. Attached to this UPDATE is a Pledge of Gift document which asks for a pledge of funds to be delivered only if the NBDP loan is approved. The project can only go forward with the State loan. An equity of \$35,000 is required for the loan. This can be provided by gift pledges from individuals or corporations. If you can pledge or know of a person or a corporation who can, please contact Spike Parrish. We have already received several pledges but still need about \$30,000 to reach the goal. Chesapeake Bay Floating Theatre, Inc. is a Section 501(c)3 non-profit corporation, and your gift would be tax deductible. Those who pledge will be acknowledged in future playbills for their contribution to this exciting project. They will also be on a special mailing list for announcements of special events held for project supporters. If you have questions, please call Spike Parrish at 410/326-2745.

Volunteers: We urge anyone who has not yet become involved to consider the exciting opportunities for you to help with this wonderful project. If you would like to have a form just call 410/326-2745.

Additions to the Mailing List: If you know of someone who should be on the mailing list please call 410/326-2745 or mail the name(s) to POB 201, Dowell, MD 20629.

Information: For additional information about any of the items discussed in this Update and for questions about the project or its progress, please call Spike Parrish, 410/326-2745.



*Ye Olde Restaurant and Apartment Complex
with 350 seat theater in rear.
Leonardtown, Maryland*

UPDATE produced by Donna and John Bailey

Chesapeake Bay Floating Theatre, Inc.
Post Office Box 201
Dowell, MD 20629

CHESAPEAKE BAY FLOATING THEATRE, INC.

BUSINESS PLAN

Phase I Leonardtown Project

Phase I of the project will be to complete acquisition of the former motion picture property which includes a restaurant and seven one-bedroom apartments. Financing for the acquisition is proposed to be from seller take-back for fifty per cent of the purchase price and the balance from a loan from the State of Maryland Neighborhood Business Development Program (NBDP). Operation is proposed to consist of lease arrangements for the currently occupied apartment units, negotiate a lease for the operation of the restaurant, and renovate the motion picture theater and make structural changes and additions to convert it to a legitimate theater and performing arts center. The center will be operated by the James Adams II Theatre Company, a branch of the Chesapeake Bay Floating Theatre, Inc.

Phase II Floating Theatre

Phase II will be to continue the effort to acquire a deck barge with a structure to be eventually converted to an indoor, 200 seat theater, which will then be moved from port to port around the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries presenting live theatre at these locations. Performances will be presented by the traveling element of the James Adams II Theatre Company. The first step in implementing this phase, the Maryland General Assembly will be petitioned to extend the One Hundred Thousand Dollar Challenge Grant approved by the 1995 Session which is due to expire on June 30, 1997.

Phase III James Adams II Theatre Company

Concurrently, efforts are underway to organize the James Adams II Theatre Company, to consist of two units, the resident company for operations at the Leonardtown facility and the traveling company for visiting future floating theatre ports-of-call and other land-based locations where profitable performance opportunities may arise. An important feature of this effort is the need to acquire affordable space in the Annapolis or Washington Metropolitan Area in which to hold auditions and rehearsals. It has proven difficult to attract quality theatrical talent to Southern Maryland for auditions and extended periods of required rehearsals.

CHESAPEAKE BAY FLOATING THEATRE, INC.

Leonardtwn Project

BUSINESS PLAN

The business plan for operating the theatre and restaurant contemplates two separate components. The first component will have two parts, the restaurant and the apartments and the second will consist of the theater space and James Adams II Theatre Company. The restaurant and the apartments will be leased and managed by appropriate management companies. Overall responsibility for supervision of the entire operation will be with an executive officer, who will initially be the President of the Board of Chesapeake Bay Floating Theatre, Inc. Maintenance and administrative personnel will be employed as needed, while theatrical productions will be presented by personnel under contract. Such personnel can include producers, directors, technical directors, designers, choreographers, costumers, musicians, musical directors, actors and technicians, depending on the production.

The attached statement of income is based upon an admission ticket price of \$13.00 and \$10.00 for seniors and children or an average of \$12.00. Attendance is estimated to average sixty-five (65) per performance for twelve shows per month for twelve months or one-hundred forty-four total performances and 9,360 admissions in the first year. This contemplates one dark week-end per months on average, giving the opportunity to mount a new production each month. In some cases this dark-weekend may also be available for outside bookings. These may provide additional revenues not herein contemplated.

The \$10,000 income projected from donations is considered to be very conservative. Other sources not

reflected in this projection are grants from arts councils and other arts organizations. The expense projections are based upon flat fee schedules for directors, technical directors, designers, choreographers, etc. in preparing the productions for opening. Cast and rehearsal crew will be compensated by the hour during rehearsals. During performances all personnel are paid a per performance flat fee

. Other expenditures are budget items subject to revision up or down as income may require or permit. The rent of \$15,000 is the amount to be contributed toward the fixed costs of the entire operation. The contract services estimate is based upon an average of five actors per show with two technicians and stage manager. The administrative staff will be responsible for managing the house and accounting for receipts. It may be desirable to recruit a corps of volunteers for ushering and attending to audiences, as is done in most downtown theaters.³

CHESAPEAKE BAY FLOATING THEATRE, INC.
Leonardtwn Project
Projected Operating Costs and Income

Jan 1 thru Dec 31, 1997

PROJECTED FIXED COSTS:

Item	Total	Restaurant	Apartments	Theatre
Dept Service	\$ 39,000	\$ 18,000	\$ 18,000	\$ 3,000
Management	8,700	1,200	1,500	6,000
Insurance	7,000	1,750	1,750	3,500
Real Estate Taxes	3,300	1,375	1,375	550
Maintenance	12,000	6,000	6,000	
Reserve for Repairs	1,200	600	600	
Total Costs	\$ 71,200	\$ 28,925	\$ 29,225	13,050

INCOME PROJECTIONS TOWARD FIXED COSTS:

Rental Income	\$ 75,500	\$ 30,000	\$ 30,500	\$ 15,000
Total Income	\$ 75,500	\$ 30,000	\$ 30,500	\$ 15,000
SURPLUS	\$ 4,300	\$ 1,075	\$ 1,275	1,950

JAMES ADAMS II THEATRE COMPANY
Projected Income and Expenditures

INCOME:

Theatre Admissions	\$ 112,320
Grants and Contributions	10,000
Total Projected Income	\$ 122,320

EXPENDITURES:

Rent	\$ 15,000
Contract Services	67,000
Advertising and Promotions	6,000
Supplies	2,000
Office Expense	1,600
Telephone	2,400
Postage	600
Utilities	3,600
Royalties	6,000
Total Projected Expenditures	104,200

PROJECTED SURPLUS **\$ 18,120**

**DETAIL OF PROJECTIONS OF ADMISSIONS AND
CONTRACT SERVICES**

Admissions:

Projections of income from admissions is based upon an average of 65 admissions per performance at \$13.00 and \$10.00 for seniors and children or an average of \$12.00. Estimates are based on 12 performances per month. Averaging \$12.00 per admission for 65 admissions per performance for twelve performances per month for twelve months amounts to \$12,00 X 65 X 144 or \$ 112,320.

Projected Income from Admissions \$ 112,320

Expenses:

Contract Services are computed from initial cost of producing a play to opening, the cost of set-up and the cost of running the show. Directors, technicians and cast are paid under contract.

Initial Costs per Production:

Director	\$ 600.00
Assistant Director	225.00
Crew (3 x 15 hrs X \$5.00)	225.00
Cast (3 X 45 hrs X \$5.00)	675.00
Cast (3 X 15 hrs X \$5.00)	225.00

Projected Production Cost to Opening \$1950.00

Running Costs:

Pro-rated Production Cost \$	165.00
\$1950 divided by 12.	
Stage Manager	50.00
Crew (2 X \$25.00)	50.00
Cast (5 x \$40.00)	200.00
 Total Running Costs	 \$ 465.00 per performance

Projection of Contract Services:

144 performances at \$ 465.00 \$ 66,960

Rounded to \$ 67,000

His Dream Keeps Rollin' Along

Md. Impresario Wants to Re-Create the Original Chesapeake Show Boat

By Todd Shields

Washington Post Staff Writer

Southern Maryland resident Spike Parrish attended the acclaimed Broadway revival of "Show Boat" in April, and he came away with the usual pleasures of plot and song. But what he remembers with gratification was a small detail of staging.

At one point, the boat is shown as it is pushed to dock by a tugboat. That, Parrish says, is historically accurate; forget the self-propelled paddle wheeler familiar to millions through the 1951 movie.

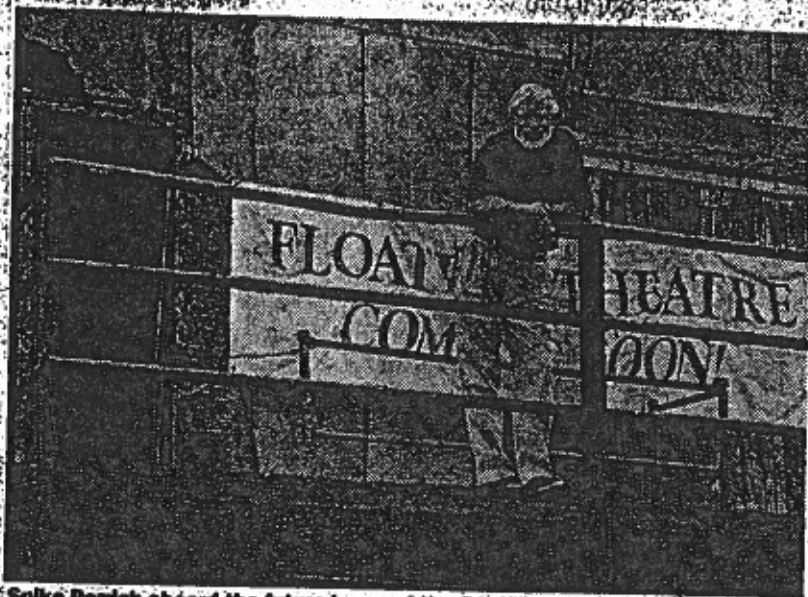
He should know, for Parrish is devoting his days to reviving the tugboat-driven barge that once plied the Chesapeake Bay. That's right, it was not a Mississippi River boat but a Chesapeake Bay vessel that lay behind the novel, play and movie versions of "Show Boat."

"Call it a vision; call it a dream," says Parrish, 75, who at the moment has little more in hand than a rusted barge and a board of directors for his project, based in Dowell, near Solomons in southern Calvert County. He has the barge docked beside a defunct restaurant on a creek near his Calvert home.

Parrish, a former director of community development for Montgomery County, longtime impresario and full-time theater enthusiast, hopes to create a modern version of the James Adams Floating Theatre. The James Adams ranged from South Carolina to Maryland from 1914 to 1941, spending most of the season on the Chesapeake, offering entertainment to isolated coastal towns in an age before television.

Parrish plans to do much the same with his Chesapeake Bay Floating Theatre company. Using an old Navy barge with a large two-story cabin covering its deck, Parrish proposes to spend March through October visiting ports such as Grasonville, Salisbury and Crisfield on the Eastern Shore and Annapolis, Baltimore and smaller communities on the western shore.

"It will be taking culture, live theater, to areas where live theater is



Spike Parrish aboard the future home of the floating theater company.

very rare, if presented at all," Parrish said. "The plays would be contemporary, light. . . . We're not going to do heavy drama [but] something that people can come out and have a good time" watching.

Calvert County tourism specialist Herman Schieke said Parrish's plans are being welcomed broadly.

"There's nothing else like it," Schieke said. "Many of my counterparts [around the bay] were very interested in it and thought it was a good idea."

In Parrish's vision, the James Adams II, brightly painted, gleaming with polished brass fittings and bearing flagstaves and banners, would be pushed into port with calliope music playing. The company of 12 actors would stage three plays over six days before moving on to the next venue. Parrish foresees ticket prices of \$15, with the nonprofit venture facing nearly \$90,000 in yearly operating costs, beyond \$377,000 in initial capital costs.

The idea is to re-create as faithfully as possible the atmosphere experienced by novelist Edna Ferber, who spent several days aboard the James Adams in 1926 before writing her drama of life on a Mississippi River show boat. Her tale later was enhanced by the music and lyrics of

Jerome Kern and Oscar Hammerstein II and was retold in at least three movies, including the 1951 blockbuster featuring Ava Gardner.

Parrish's goal remains distant, three years after he began pursuing his vision in earnest and five years after first hearing of the original James Adams during a visit to Church Hill on the Eastern Shore with the Maryland Traveling Repertory Theater Company, which he founded.

He has received preliminary approval for \$45,000 in seed money from the state government and \$5,000 from Calvert County, but both bureaucracies are negotiating details.

Meanwhile, the donated barge sits empty and corroding on Back Creek across from Solomons, powder blue siding peeling from its cabin and holes gaping from its walls.

Undaunted, Parrish stands in the dim interior, where all is rust and decay, explaining what will go where.

"The stage will be at the other end," he said, gesturing. "There will be a slanted balcony up in that section. This will be an orchestra."

He can't help loving that boat of his.