

FISHING | SCHOLARSHIPS

Teen angler hooked on school of fish

Chang is one of 32 students across U.S. in mentoring program

By Lee Tolliver
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VIRGINIA BEACH

The big carp twisted its goldfish-colored body and easily freed itself from Mary Chang's tiny hands.

"You've really got to grip it," instructed Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries biologist Chad Boyce.

Chang, who will be a junior at Bishop Sullivan Catholic High School, is learning more about fishing than how to bait a hook.

Chang is spending the summer as a Hutton Junior Fisheries Biology Program scholarship winner. She is one of only 32 high school students from across the country participating in the eight-week summer mentoring program.

The 16-year-old earned a \$3,000 college scholarship for being chosen.

"I really love fishing," Chang said. "I wish I would have known about this program last summer, because it's a good way to get people more interested in fish biology."

Chang said she plans to study marine biology at either the University of Virginia or at UNC Wilmington.

She has spent much of her time on Back Bay helping



Mary Chang won a \$3,000 scholarship as a Hutton Junior Fisheries Biology Program participant.

Boyce with his studies of submerged aquatic vegetation and with fish identification and population.

"I've learned so much about SAVs already," Chang said about water grasses. "And we've done quite a bit of sampling using the shocking. I'm learning a lot, and this is a great way to spend the summer."

She uses her interest in fisheries issues as a member of the school's National Ocean Sciences Bowl team.

"It's one of those buzzer-question competitions," said Chang, who also competes with her school's cross country and crew team. "I think we came in ninth out of 25 teams at this year's nationals in D.C."

With a tighter grip on the

carp, Chang gave the fish the once over and tossed it back in the water, where it quickly swam out of sight.

"This is a really good program, and I'm learning a lot," she said. "I'm really sure now that this is what I want to do with myself."

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VEGETATION | Growth essential to Back Bay's resurgence

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Unlike recent years, there's a chance he'll get one.

Fishing this way takes Snider back decades, when he was one of the best anglers on what were some of the hottest bassing waters in the country.

In the 1960s and '70s, Back Bay basically was one enormous bed of submerged grass. Crappie, perch and bluegill were abundant, some growing to trophy size.

The grass also made the waters at the southernmost end of Virginia Beach a pretty good place to hunt ducks in the fall.

But the grasses disappeared in the early 1980s. Fishing tanked. Ducks scratched off the place from their flight plans.

And Snider was concerned by what was left. He had just built a home in Creeds so he could be closer to his beloved fishing waters.

"One big mud hole," he said. "It seems like it just died overnight. It was great bass fishing one day and nothing the next. "Strange. Very strange. And really disappointing."

Theories on the bay's demise were plentiful - construction and farm runoff, the closure of a saltwater pump at Sandbridge or maybe just the downside of a natural cycle.

These days anglers, biologists and environmentalists are sounding more positive about the bay. Grasses are making a serious comeback, and bass fishing is on the rise.

Snider doesn't really care about the reasons. At 74, and still pro-wrestler strong, he's just happy to be back in the wa-

ters he fished almost daily for more than 20 years.

"I never thought I'd see this again in my lifetime," he said.

Chad Boyce missed the good of days, but he now spends lots of time on Back Bay as a fisheries biologist with the state game department.

Much of his work centers on the bay's grass and fish populations. Moting southeast from the Pocahontas National Wildlife Refuge, Boyce slowed his boat along the shores of a marsh island and pointed to acres of grass that had grown tall enough to mat the surface.

Like Snider, Boyce is thrilled with what he sees, but his optimism is more reserved.

"Grasses were starting to show signs of coming back a little bit a few years ago, and it didn't really amount to much," he said. "But we saw even more grass last year, and now the entire east side and lots of places down south are loaded with it."

"If this growth can make it through the winter, there's no telling what it could look like next year."

Boyce plans to help increase the odds of that happening. One of his theories is based on water turbidity. Grasses prevent the bottom silt from washing up and covering plant life during winds and storms.

So in areas where there isn't much grass, Boyce plans to place floating curtains designed to slow wave action - allowing seeds and roots to do their thing next spring.

"It's a theory, but I really think it will work. It can't hurt," he said.

Todd Barnes, president of



Biologist Chad Boyce slowly makes his way through Eurasian watermilfoil at Back Bay. Boyce has theorized that keeping the water's turbidity down will help vegetation take root.

the Back Bay Restoration Foundation, is sure Boyce's plan will work. Keeping the turbidity down and the waters clear is essential in the bay's comeback fight.

"We're making some pretty good leads now," said Barnes, who grew up fishing the bay. "The (U.S.) Fish and Wildlife Service has purchased so much land around the bay and created a buffer. Sandbridge is now on the city's sewage system, so septic runoff isn't there anymore. And the farmers are using no-till practices that are really helping."

"Now I think it's just a question of letting the bay do its thing and making sure to do whatever we can to keep turbidity as low as possible."

Boyce added milfoil. While it is the most important grass for bass fishing, it can be its own worst enemy because it's a nutrient-limiting vegetation.

"I think the milfoil ran its course, eating up all the nutrients it needs, then dying off," he said. "The nutrients have gotten a chance to return, so the milfoil starts growing again. The more milfoil that grows, the healthier and clearer the bay gets."

"Fish and ducks come back in better numbers. The cycle could be on the upswing."

Snider hears a splash over his left shoulder and turns to cast.

He's still got the touch.

During the bay's boom, nobody was better at catching bass here. From 1962 to 1983, Snider caught 61 trophy bass bigger than 8 pounds. His two biggest each topped 10 pounds.

"This place was full of 5- and 6-pound fish," he said. "I guess I was so successful because I was here every day."

Snider has waded through the bay's grasses about a dozen times this year.

He has had some productive days, where he caught more than 10 bass.

"That's nothing compared to what it used to be, but I'll take it," he said, inching his way down a shoreline. "Used to be that 10 casts would get you 10 bass."

"Those days are gone. But I'm tickled with being able to do this again."

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STADIUM | Named for the first donor willing to 'pony up'

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university president Roseann Runte had stipulated the school raise \$8 million in six months if visions of football at ODU were to move forward.

Alonzo Brandon's first couple of calls to potential donors came up empty. Brandon, vice president for development and alumni relations, was beginning to wonder if football stood a chance.

Then someone pointed him toward Ballard, a self-proclaimed football nut who had played at Maury High in the early 1970s and was once a ball boy for the semi-pro Norfolk Neptunes.

"Look, I'd cut ODU a \$25,000 check back in the 1980s the first time there was talk about football coming to the school," he said. "I was one of the first

to do it. I've always wanted football."

Ballard is best known for having built the Ted Constant Convocation Center, and S.B. Ballard Construction has worked on a variety of projects throughout the campus.

But at the point when Brandon approached him, Ballard was "off the books" at ODU, having completed work on a parking deck a few months earlier.

With no ongoing project at ODU, Ballard agreed to a gift of \$2.5 million. His construction company subsequently won the bid for the \$24.8 million refurbishing of Foreman Field, the addition of an adjacent parking deck and the construction of Foreman Field's gameday building.

Ballard made the contribution nearly 18 months before

requests for proposals on the Foreman Field job went out.

"Nobody on the contracting committee knew that Steve had made the contribution," Brandon said.

"His donation had nothing to do with his company getting the bid."

In addition to the Constant Center, Ballard, who grew up in Norfolk's Colonial Place, has had a hand in the construction of the Powhatan Sports Complex - it houses lacrosse, field hockey and the football team's practice facility - the University Village Apartments and the Student Rec Center.

Rather than name it Steve Ballard Stadium, he went with S.B. to appease his daughter, Stephanie Brook, and son, Stephen Boyd.

"I almost got it all covered with that," Ballard said, add-

ing he had no idea how to work his wife, B.J., into the naming equation. "If I'd had it my way, we would have held off naming the stadium until the opening kick."

The name of the stadium will appear on the press box facades and the coaches box at the top of the east and west sets of stands.

ODU's Board of Visitors also approved two other measures involving names: The gameday building will be called Ainslie Football Complex, after contributor Jeff Ainslie, and the plaza next to the gameday building will be the Alcaraz-Weinstein Family Plaza, following contributions by local businessman Gary Alcaraz and Dr. Lee Weinstein.

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corecard

BASEBALL

International League

North	W	L	Pct.	GB
Scranton (Yankees)	52	39	.571	-
Syracuse (Nationals)	49	44	.527	4
Lehigh Valley (Phillies)	47	48	.495	7
Rochester (Twins)	45	48	.484	8
Pawtucket (Red Sox)	44	48	.478	8½
Buffalo (Mets)	34	57	.374	18

South	W	L	Pct.	GB
Norfolk (Orioles)	54	40	.574	-
Durham (Rays)	53	42	.558	1½
Gwinnett (Braves)	51	45	.531	4
Charlotte (White Sox)	43	52	.453	11½

West	W	L	Pct.	GB
Louisville (Reds)	54	41	.568	-
Indianapolis (Pirates)	45	50	.474	9
Toledo (Tigers)	44	50	.468	9½
Columbus (Indians)	42	55	.442	12

Sunday's games
Pawtucket 3, Indianapolis 2
Toledo 5, Buffalo 3
Syracuse 5, Columbus 2
Gwinnett 5, Scranton/Wilkes-Barre 3
Lehigh Valley 3, Rochester 2
Louisville 7, Durham 5, 13 innings
Norfolk 4, Charlotte 3

Monday's games
Gwinnett 7, Norfolk 6
Indianapolis 3, Durham 1
Toledo 4, Syracuse 2
Columbus 8, Scranton/Wilkes-Barre 1
Louisville 5, Buffalo 1
Rochester 12, Pawtucket 5
Charlotte 1, Lehigh Valley 0

Today's games
Durham at Indianapolis, 7 p.m.
Scranton at Toledo, 7 p.m.
Norfolk at Gwinnett, 7 p.m.
Buffalo at Louisville, 7:05 p.m.

Pawtucket at Rochester, 7:05 p.m.
Scranton/Wilkes-Barre at Columbus, 7:05 p.m.
Lehigh Valley at Charlotte, 7:15 p.m.

Wednesday's games
Durham at Indianapolis, 1 p.m.
Norfolk at Gwinnett, 7 p.m.
Buffalo at Louisville, 7:05 p.m.
Pawtucket at Rochester, 7:05 p.m.
Scranton/Wilkes-Barre at Columbus, 7:05 p.m.
Lehigh Valley at Charlotte, 7:15 p.m.

Gwinnett 7, Tides 6

Tides	ab	r	h	bi	Gwinnett	ab	r	h	bi
Davis ss	4	1	0	0	Gorecki cf	4	2	3	0
Turner 2b	3	1	1	0	Timmons 3b	2	2	1	0
Florentino cf	3	1	0	0	Johnson 2b	4	2	3	7
Aubrey 1b	3	0	1	0	Canizares dh	4	0	0	0
Diaz lf	4	1	1	0	Burke ss	4	0	0	0
Snider dh	4	0	0	0	Jones 1b	4	0	0	0
Dortch rf	4	1	1	0	Perez 1b	4	0	0	0
Hammock c	3	0	2	0	Pope 3b	0	0	0	0
Pinckney 3b	3	1	0	0	Sammons c	2	0	0	0
					Barton rf	3	1	0	0
Totals	31	6	5	5	Totals	33	7	9	7

Tides 006 000 000-4
Gwinnett 300 030 10x-7
E-Redmond (3), Gorecki (7), LOB-Tides 3, Gwinnett 4, 2B-Turner (16), Sammons (21), HR-Diaz (1), Johnson (2), S-Pinckney, SF-Florentino, Aubrey.

Tides

ip	h	r	er	bb	so
Patton	4.2	6	6	6	1
Miller L, 2-3	1.2	1	0	0	0
Perrault	1.2	1	0	0	0

Gwinnett

ip	h	r	er	bb	so
Caryle	1.0	0	0	0	0
Redmond	5.0	6	0	0	2
Perez W, 2-2	1.1	0	0	0	0
Valdez S, 17	1.2	0	0	0	0

T-2-45, A-4.605.

Norfolk Tides individual stats through Sunday's games

BATTING	POS	G	AB	R	H	2B	3B	HR	RB	TB	SB	CS	OBP	SLO	AVG	OPS
Lou Montez	OF	10	42	8	18	3	0	0	3	21	5	0	0.300	500	500	429
Nolan Reimold	OF	31	109	21	43	11	0	9	27	81	18	25	0.345	743	394	1,228
Oscar Salazar	1B	50	199	31	74	17	1	10	43	123	13	27	0.348	618	372	1,027
Joey Gathright	CF	51	196	34	64	9	1	0	7	75	17	28	0.385	376	323	764
Jeff Florentino	RF	63	224	49	71	11	4	4	44	118	28	44	0.338	527	317	915
Blake Davis	SS	11	36	6	11	1	0	1	2	15	4	6	0.211	366	217	306
Matt Wieters	C	39	141	25	43	9	2	5	30	71	20	30	0.387	504	305	890
Michael Aubrey	1B	77	282	35	86	25	1	4	44	134	16	31	0.339	475	305	814
Justin Turner	2B	67	238	31	72	15	0	2	25	93	17	21	0.350	391	303	741
Brandon Pinckney	3B	38	132	12	38	2	0	1	9	43	2	19	0.307	326	288	532
Justin Christian	CF	88	356	54	96	18	5	2	35	133	20	51	0.316	374	270	683
Robert Cabrera	SS	78	294	30	77	18	1	1	50	118	12	60	0.298	400	262	689
Melvin Dorta	2B	54	185	17	48	8	0	3	17	65	24	5	0.312	351	259	663
Scott Moore	3B	32	123	19	31	7	0	7	21	59	8	22	0.316	480	252	796
Steve Torrealba	C	32	96	5	21	6	0	2	11	33	10	19	0.281	330	244	574
Dannic Murphy	SS	3	9	1	2	0	0	0	1	3	0	0	0.300	556	222	856
Brandon Snyder	1B	27	94	13	20	5	1	2	1	296	35	213	0.347	211	212	506
Chad Mueller	C	26	85	4	18	4	0	0	6	22	4	15	0.247	259	212	506
Mike Costanzo	3B	22	68	8	14	4	2	0	8	22	13	0	0.337	324	206	661
Robby Hammock	DH	54	193	17	37	10	0	0	7	56	13	47	0.284	290	192	540
Carlos Rojas	SS	64	196	16	32	3	1	0	10	37	17	2	0.228	189	163	417
Zach Booker	C	2	4	0	0	0	0									