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CAPE COD COMMERCIAL FISHERMEN'S ALLIANCE

Small Boats. Big Ideas.

*An e-magazine about our fishing community –
who we are, how we fish and our connection to the sea*

March 28, 2018

Fish Tales

From scratch: A hand-crafted history in Harwich

On a quiet cul-desac in East Harwich, Maggie Ribb flips through a smudged notebook filled with notes and drawings about various shellfishing rakes that her husband Ron made, and that she and her daughters have contributed to as well. They detail a history of handcrafting that extends back more than 40 years.



By the door are some ready-to-ship Ribb Rakes, known internationally for their meticulous craftsmanship. Attached to each is a handwritten thank you note from Maggie Ribb.

Sometimes Maggie, her hair straight as iron, is tempted to say it's all just business.

But it's not.

"It's personal," she admits.


The story continues here...



On the Horizon

We have lots of exciting stuff happening.

 The Fishermen's Alliance is happy to present our 2017 Annual Report. 2017 was a successful year, made possible by the help and support of our generous donors, community members, sponsors and volunteers. [Click here](#) to read more about our year in review.

 3x your impact! From March 12-31, Amazon is tripling the donation rate on your first smile.amazon.com purchase! [Click here](#) to activate Amazon Smile.

 Thank you to our bowlers and supporters of Rally the Alleys that took place on March 23. In partnership with [Habitat for Humanity](#) and [A.L.S Family Charity Foundation](#), Rally the Alleys raised \$1,500 in support of the Fishermen's Alliance.

On the Water

Ever wonder how a boat, or a fish, got its

Plumbing the Depths

Crafting a clam plan, and more

Ed Janiunas came to the Cape via Wall Street and after volunteering in the Yarmouth Shellfish Department, he began thinking of a new career path – working with millions of oysters instead of millions of dollars' in bonds.



So he got a three-acre grant in an area of Lewis Bay that Yarmouth recently opened up to aquaculture and began his new life as a grant holder. The occupation holds all the joys of commuting to work in a kayak, and all the unforeseen headaches of Jetskis using his buoys as a slalom course, or losing thousands of dollars in an ice storm.

"I love it. It's fun," said Janiunas. "But if anyone had said, 'You're going to be an oysterman on the Cape,' I would have said, 'You're smoking something.'"

Janiunas isn't a typical grantholder, but neither is he the first bond trader to turn shellfish farmer. And as more and more people look to aquaculture as a part-and full-time job, meeting a growing market demand, a problem looms.

The story continues here...

Aids to Navigation

Shellfish Scholars

On a recent morning at Monomoy Regional Middle School, a group of fifth-graders gathered around a large table, gazing through murky beakers, peering into low water-filled plastic trays, waiting for oysters to do their stuff.



"Oysters clean the ocean by filtering it," says Jonathan Coleman. Another student, Tyler Santoro, adds excitedly: "They can filter 100 gallons of water a day!"

These students are in a special elective class called "Oyster Flats," taught by Michael Schaffer, the school's English Language Learner teacher.

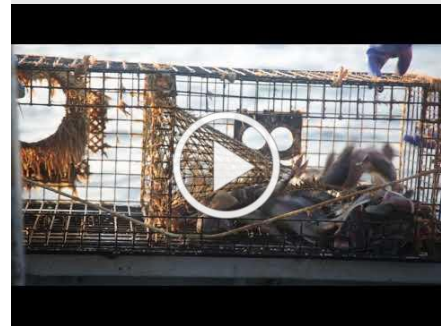
Schaffer has a strong nostalgic reason for wanting to teach his students about a healthy marine ecosystem.

The story continues here...

name? Want the word on what people are catching --- or how to cook it?



Kurt Martin, of Orleans, talks about how his boat got her name. Some say it's because he is such a good fisherman he actually can create additional time for himself (like Hermione in the Harry Potter series, or perhaps Albert Einstein). But that isn't the case.



On the Shore

This community thrives in large part because of a constellation of non-profit organizations and engaged businesses.



Fishermen can't exist without a healthy ocean, so we, like many others, are horrified about the amount of plastics in the seas.

Sustainable Practices, a local advocacy non-profit that formed last year, is trying to combat this menace and has gotten attention first for a movie series which began with "A Plastic Ocean," and then for a proposed all-Cape plastic bottle ban.

The next Sustainability Film Series event is March 31, 10 a.m. at the *Chatham Orpheum*, with a screening of "Tapped," which examines

Charting the Past

Where it all begins, the ARC of shellfish propagation

If you have enjoyed local shellfish, chances are your meal started as a seed from the Aquacultural Research Corporation.



The ARC hatchery, located in Dennis on a beautiful spit of land on Cape Cod Bay at the mouth of Chase Garden Creek, provides approximately 80 percent of the seed for shellfish propagation on Cape Cod, and spawns millions of oysters and quahogs every year.

It is the only hatchery on the Cape.

Founded in 1960 by Van Alan Clark, Jr. and his brothers, who were heirs to the Avon Cosmetics fortune, ARC was a pioneer in the shellfish industry.

The story continues here...

Over the Bar

For the shell of it

This issue of “Small Boats, Big Ideas” shifts our focus for just a moment. We turn from finfish – groundfish, flatfish, roundfish – toward that other kind of fish that chooses to build its bones on the outside, as armor: shellfish.



The food and livelihoods shellfish provide have always played a crucial role. But their pursuit has never been the stuff of romance and legend the way offshore fishing stokes our imaginations. Put it this way, Melville didn't build a great American novel about the search for a white oyster. Hemingway's old man didn't spend three existential days fighting to land a quahog.

It's scratch versus catch, harvest versus hunt, and in the generally macho hierarchy of fishing, hunters who roam toward the horizon and chase prey fathoms deep have always been considered the “real” fishermen.

Yet from the very outset, animals with shells have made it possible to live by the sea. They offer a kind of ballast. When times get tough offshore, when highliners are not as high as they'd like to be, when weather stops the hunt, when animals that roam the seas evade our best efforts to find them, there is always the rake, a low tide, and fertile flats. These modest animals have been our fallback, staple, and much more of an economic powerhouse than most people appreciate. The cool writer Mark Kurlansky, who did great work highlighting the role of codfish in our world, also

the role of the bottled water industry and its effects on health, climate change, pollution, and oil consumption.



Paul Schulenburg has been a regular presence at the Chatham Fish Pier for 20 years, but he isn't a fisherman. He is a *painter*.

“I feel like I am drawn to the working fisherman on one hand because their line of work is so very different from mine. They go out on the ocean, risking their lives, to catch fish and bring them back.

I paint on dry land, usually in nice weather or inside my studio, protected from the elements. Two very different ways to make a living,” Schulenburg said. “But I feel a kind of connection too in that we both are involved in work that dates back to man's earliest days. Since before there was recorded history human beings have caught fish for nourishment, and they have drawn in the sand or on cave walls for pleasure or education – ancient pastimes that hang in a precarious balance in our modern age. The fishermen and I have that in common.”



Cape Cod Young Professionals is issuing a scholarship to one Cape Cod resident to advance their career either through training, classes, or through leadership courses. This applies to everyone who lives and works on Cape Cod, including fishermen. *Click here* to find out more.

On the Hook

We do a lot of reading, searching through the

makes a convincing case that it would be much more appropriate and true to nickname New York City “The Big Oyster” rather than “The Big Apple.”

At this point in our fishing history, aquaculture – staking out rectangles of bottom, assigning rights to plant and farm to individual fishermen – is assuming increasing importance. These near-shore farmers co-exist, sometimes uneasily, with property owners who don’t always like seeing work on flats they think of as their front yards, and also with those who still try to make a living (or part of a living) filling and selling buckets of wild catch scratched off areas that are in the public domain, reserved for no one but anyone who can get a permit.

One great thing about our version of aquaculture, unlike shrimp farms in Thailand, or salmon pens in the Pacific Northwest, is that we add nothing to the environment when we practice our husbandry. There is no food other than what the tides provide, no antibiotic to stop disease spread by overcrowding, no growth hormones to speed the process. We seed, we plant, we cull, we protect and nurture, and that’s it. Like all farmers, there are times when we succeed, and times when Nature denies a harvest. We carry on.

Another great thing about our aquaculture is that the animals we grow, mostly oysters and quahogs, offer subtle but profound benefits to our environment. They may be a kind of magic bullet simply by doing what they have always done; taking in nitrogen and using that nutrient to grow. We have overloaded our waterways with nitrogen runoff, mainly from our septic systems. If these little bivalves can quietly work alongside wastewater treatment systems, and substitute for even a fraction of the capacity we need, they will save us huge tax money and help return our shorelines to health.

All this played into the thinking when the Fishermen’s Alliance invested in the Aquaculture Research Corporation, ARC, the only shellfish hatchery in our region, the crucial piece for maintaining an industry that by conservative estimate creates several thousand local jobs, many year-round. Without ARC’s seed, hundreds of individual growers and dozens of town propagation projects would falter. The hatchery has now been rebuilt and is gearing up to produce more seed than ever.

That effort does not replace our focus on finfish. It is a companion to that, very much in keeping with our reading of history, very much in line with our understanding of what it takes to keep a fishing community healthy.



(John Pappalardo is the CEO of the Cape Cod Commercial Fishermen's Alliance)

wide world of fisheries, and often find intriguing pieces to share. In the old days, you might call this your clipping service.



Youngsters have been going to sea to learn how to make a living for as long as there have been boats, and many a fisherman got into the business crewing and learning the trade. But in recent years that generational link has been frayed, if not broken. *This* program aims to change that.



According to *this* article, five million alewives and blueback herring once passed through the Aquinnah herring run each year. By the Martha’s Vineyard Wampanoag tribe’s count, fewer than 23,000 fish made the journey last year. This is one of the many reasons why the Fishermen’s Alliance is advocating a buffer zone that would keep the mid-water trawl fleet more than 12 miles off the region’s coast, 30 miles off Cape Cod, and for all 12 months.



When you hear the word “Saildrone,” think of an autonomous windsurfer, which by the way helps monitor the Alaskan pollock population. Now Saildrone’s owner wants to expand and build 1,000 more of the floating observers to cover more ocean. *Read* about the plan and efforts to develop infrastructure to get data gathered about the ocean back to land.



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