



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, 2019

Fish Tales

Miss Fitz gets a facelift for the future

The parking lot at Ryder's Cove boatyard was virtually empty on a cold March morning when several pickup trucks pulled in and waited with engines running.



Soon a trailered boat so white it was temporarily blinding in sunlight pulled around the corner.

"I don't even think she was that white when I originally had her built," said John Our of his boat Miss Fitz. "They call it Snow White."

Alan Cohen and his dog Chester had walked over from the boatyard to admire the nearly 30-year-old boat that had spent the winter being refurbished.

"Told you I spent all my money," Our joked, as another small sedan pulled in to check the work.

Although more people will undoubtedly be down at the fish pier when the Miss Fitz splashes later this spring, the lure was plain to see.

"Not many people spend the money on boats anymore," said Our. "Some people will never do it."

The story continues here ...

Photo by *Christine Walsh Sanders Photography*

Plumbing the Depths

Hearing is believing: Our oceans are getting

On the Horizon

We have lots of exciting stuff happening.



2018 was a year of many successes for the Fishermen's Alliance, on the water and in the community. Read more about our year in our 2018 Annual Report, showing up in mailboxes across the Cape. Stop into the office if you want to grab one. In 2019, we will continue to pursue our mission: protecting our marine ecosystem and sustaining our fishing traditions for future generations.



We work to ensure that our traditional fishing industry continues to thrive and be a vital contributor to the Cape Cod economy. Support from the local business community is crucial in meeting that goal. Thank you to our growing list of sponsors for 2019:
Ben & Jerry's North Eastham, Canyon View Capital, Chatham Bars Inn, Eastern Bank Charitable Foundation, evolutioneyes, Gibson Sotheby's International Realty, Hog Island Beer Co., Nauset Disposal, Nauset Marine, TD

Louder

Chris Clark has made a life of listening to whales and was invited to a Congressional hearing to speak on the threat seismic testing for oil reserves poses to the highly endangered North Atlantic Right Whale.



The repetitive loud explosions, comparable to how the launch of the space shuttle sounds to bystanders, has been shown to make a mess of how whales communicate, feed and breed.

“It has been known since the time of Aristotle, and repeated and confirmed by scientific studies, that marine mammals depend on sound to survive,” the marine bioacoustics expert told the committee in Washington, D.C. in March. “The occurrences of seismic air gun explosions from surveys throughout the North Atlantic have been well documented and are essentially unavoidable.”

The Northern Hemisphere is lit up with noise and the North Atlantic Right Whales are on the precipice of extinction. Their southern counterparts live in a far quieter ocean which is otherwise quite similar, and are doing very well. That’s more than a warning sign, he said.

But right whale impact is just the well-publicized tip of the iceberg.

The story continues here ...

Photo Courtesy of Chris Clark

Aids to Navigation

From wampum to nitrogen, third graders view the world through shellfish

Many people notice shells in tide pools or at the edge of the sea and don’t give them another thought.

Not Max Furman.

“I think, What are they doing in their shell? Are they trying to find food?”

Furman says he has never eaten shellfish, but he knows they are important to the way the Cape’s environment works. Just how important he isn’t sure, but the Harwich third grader is about to find out.

Third graders in both Chatham and Harwich will be starting a new shellfish unit next month, an effort launched by the Cape Cod Commercial Fishermen’s



Bank and The Black Dog Tavern Company. To get involved as a sponsor please contact *Jennifer Bryant.*



Lace up for the Fishermen’s

Alliance! We are now accepting runner applications for our team for the *2019 New Balance Falmouth Road Race* taking place on Sunday, August 18. Join our team and you’ll receive a training plan and coaching to help you achieve your personal best. All levels of runners are invited. Please contact team manager *Caroline Lane* for more information.



Our Meet the Fleet series for the 2019

season launched Wednesday, March 27, and highlighted local shellfish. Thank you to our special guests, Chatham’s Assistant Shellfish Constable Rachel Hutchinson and *The Pheasant’s* owner Adam Dunn for joining us. Our next Meet the Fleet will be Wednesday, June 26 at 5 p.m. at *Nauset Marine East* in Orleans. For more information and how to reserve your space for June, please visit our *events page.* We are grateful for the continued support from our exclusive Meet the Fleet sponsor *Gibson Sotheby’s International Realty.*

On the Water

Ever wonder how a boat, or a fish, got its name? Want the word on what people are catching --- or how to cook it?

Alliance, partnering with A.R.C Hatchery in Dennis, the Monomoy Regional School District, and supported through a handful of grants.

The story continues here ...

Charting the Past

Safe Passages through the Past

The floating lighthouses that once occupied the channels around Cape Cod are long gone, lost to storms, failed moorings, collisions, disrepair and the inevitable forward march of technology. But for more than one hundred years, from the mid-1800s to the late 1960s, lightships marked the way for thousands of sailors, fishermen and commercial mariners. Positioned strategically on navigation routes, lightships were placed where land-based lighthouses could not be erected.



For centuries after the American colonies were first established, the sea route between New York and Boston, by way of the outer shores of Cape Cod, served as the commercial shipping avenue for raw materials, finished goods, and passengers. Numerous shoals and regular fog made the route hazardous to travel without navigational assistance, so by the nineteenth century the United States Lighthouse Service started to build and designate lighted, anchored vessels to mark a safe passage through Nantucket and Vineyard sounds.

The story continues here ...

Photo courtesy of the Nantucket Historical Association

A Day in Photos

A star is reborn

Twenty six years is a long time, older than a few captains in the fleet, older than his own children, almost older than his wedding vows. Just about as old as this organization.



John Our has had a long, long history in the fishing industry, that started when he was five. His boat, Miss Fitz, has been with him most of that, certainly the vast majority of his career.

This winter he had her completely redone and she looks like a brand new boat. This photo gallery gives a glimpse



Now that Kyle and Wendy Farrell have begun to return thousands of oysters from their winter refuge in a secluded neighborhood off Baker's Pond Road to their rightful watery home in Cape Cod Bay, we thought it would be nice to remember the chilly trip from the beach last December. The oysters are making the move to their cages off Skaket Beach, Orleans, but late last year they were hauled off the flats to protect them from ice that frequently visits Cape Cod Bay (though this year was not as icy). *Listen* to this short interview from Kyle Farrell, who co-owns Rock Creek Oysters with his wife Wendy, about the joys and difficulties of being a grant holder. This is the first of many podcasts made possible with support from cultural councils up and down the Cape as well as the Chatham Fund.

Photo by Christine Walsh Sanders Photography

On the Shore

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



WOMR-WFMR will throw itself a *birthday party* at the station's home, 494 Commercial St. in Provincetown on Sunday, April 14 from 2 to 6 p.m. The radio station is a mainstay

into the process and the finished product. Fair winds and following seas.

[See gallery here ...](#)

Photo by Christine Walsh Sanders Photography

Over the Bar

With shellfish, let's shuck fact from fiction

By John Pappalardo

When the Fishermen's Alliance helped pull together a solid group of funders – public, private, and non-profit – to save the Cape's one and only shellfish hatchery in Dennis, some people wondered why we would bother.



After all, shellfishing nearshore is a whole different reality from finfishing offshore. Why would a commercial fishing organization get involved? Was there some kind of ulterior motive? Is the Fishermen's Alliance trying to push for more aquaculture, drive out wild harvesters, change the historic local use of flats and shallows that for generations have helped families subsist?

The conspiracy theories are imaginary, hidden agendas don't exist. The truth is that the hatchery in Dennis was in transition, and in a precarious position; without it, hundreds if not thousands of jobs on the waterfront, year-round jobs, jobs that support young working families, would have been jeopardized. Whether you're working a grant, scratching in the wild or on areas seeded by the town, selling shellfish retail or wholesale, serving them on the halfshell in a fancy restaurant or around the kitchen table, the industry needs one thing most of all; healthy baby seed that grows into plump animals for harvest. That's what the hatchery provides, and that's what has been saved.

We're proud of our part in that. And to anyone who thinks there is something devious about our plans or motives, I have a suggestion: Judge us by our actions. We are not buying shellfish grants, or trying to interfere with wild harvesters. We are not trying to pave the way for some kind of corporate takeover of our waterfront. We are trying to keep one more historic local fishery alive.

The more we worked on that goal, the more obvious it became that our shellfish community needs to talk a lot more, share a lot more, find a lot more common ground, advocate for ourselves a lot better, and distrust a lot less.

Out of that came the idea for creating what is now being called the Massachusetts Shellfish Initiative.

Borrowing great language from my colleague here at the Fishermen's Alliance and our point person on the project,

of Cape Cod and a supporter of all things community, including our *Voices from the Wheelhouse* shows that feature fishermen. Some of us will be there helping raise money for their capital campaign, listening to local favorite Zoe Lewis and the Souvenirs, who play a retro mix of cabaret, jazz, swing, and world beat grooves; Kim Moberg will open. There will also be a silent and art auction. General admission is \$15, which will get you one drink ticket and one taco ticket. Children under 12 get in free.



Last summer we partnered with *Northwest Atlantic Seal Consortium* and *Atlantic White Shark Conservancy* through our longstanding pier host program to emphasize how the Cape's ecosystem is intricately connected. Now that it's the offseason, we want to highlight a cool opportunity AWSC offers – the Gills Club. The free club is held at the Brewster Museum of Natural History and dedicated to empowering the next generation of female shark scientists, providing young girls with hands-on experience to help pursue their passion for working with sharks. You need to reserve a spot, more information [here](#).



Our Congressional delegation has been supporting the Blue Economy of late. Securing funding for *dredging* Wellfleet Harbor comes to mind, as does making sure fishermen are involved as decision-makers in the "SAVE the Right Whales" *legislation*. For both, they deserve a thank you.

Melissa Sanderson, here's what MSI really is:

- A forum to bring diverse opinions together to identify solutions to emerging issues. This is an opportunity for the community – aquaculture lease holders, wild harvesters, state regulators, town officials, wholesalers, restoration advocates– to get together and search for common ground.
- A process to pull together good ideas, check them out with a wide range of people, and pass those ideas along to state and town officials and anyone else who wants to listen. Those ideas will be documented in a strategic plan.
- A project of Cape Cod Commercial Fishermen's Alliance, The Nature Conservancy, and Massachusetts Aquaculture Association. We approached the Mass. Division of Marine Fisheries and the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs with the idea; they committed staff and resources to partner on the project.
- Led by a 19-member Taskforce; the list of members is online: massshellfishinitiative.org/msi-task-force.

Here's what MSI is not:

- A government entity.
- A group with the authority to create or change regulations.
- A secret attempt to undermine home-rule, "privatize" the flats, or change how folks make a living.
- An initiative with predetermined outcomes. We are at the very beginning of the process. No one has missed an opportunity to participate.

MSI was created to face emerging issues that the state and towns are not ready to handle. We are not better prepared for another harmful algae bloom closure or shellfish disease outbreak; the state has even fewer resources to react to the next crisis. This is especially concerning when you consider that farmed oysters are the third most valuable seafood in the state, worth \$27 million a year to harvesters alone.

How do towns use shellfish to improve water quality without jeopardizing shellfish businesses? How do state officials protect public health while not overburdening shellfish harvesters? How do we make sure the flats stay productive and healthy, avoiding closures? How does shellfish get a fair share of public funding?

All these issues have been around for years with no way to address or even discuss them. We want that to change. The more people involved the better. The deeper the engagement, the more likely we'll reach some solid consensus, and progress.

Three founding non-profits were awarded a \$100,000 grant from National Fish and Wildlife Foundation to support two years of activities, towards a total project budget of \$230,000 (the remaining \$130,000 is the value of donated time from the Fishermen's Alliance, The Nature Conservancy, Massachusetts Aquaculture Association, and UMass Boston). The grant has allowed us to hire a consultant to organize meetings, and document results.

Trying to keep the Taskforce at a manageable size, four towns were selected to represent the state's four coastal

On the Hook

We do a lot of reading, searching through the wide world of fisheries, and often find intriguing pieces to share. In the old days, you might call this your clipping service.



This *article* on seismic air guns includes a moment

of amusement in an otherwise serious hearing. For more about our noisy oceans, see our reporting in this month's Plumbing the Depths story. U.S. Senators Jeanne Shaheen and Maggie Hassan, of New Hampshire, have teamed up with New Jersey Senator Cory Booker, also a Democrat, and others to reintroduce the Atlantic Seismic Airgun Protection Act, aka ASAP, which would prohibit oil, gas, and methane hydrate-related seismic activities in the Atlantic Ocean.



Massachusetts biotechnology company is angling to grow the first genetically modified salmon ever produced in this country. *Read* more about what has already won approval and critics are calling "Frankenfish."



Coastal researchers say

Chatham's municipal fish pier and main mooring field for the commercial fleet is now virtually cut off from Pleasant Bay. "While the commercial fleet ... was able to use the North Cut last year, the most recent report shows a large, wide sandy plateau that is 4 to 5 feet

geographies (Cape, South Shore, South Coast, and North Shore). Chatham is very pro wild harvest, Duxbury is very pro aquaculture, New Bedford has dramatic plans to expand shellfish opportunities, and Gloucester represents the North Shore. Omitting Wellfleet, with its historic industry and many diggers and growers with important knowledge, was a mistake. The founding groups will urge the Taskforce to add a representative from that town.

We also think that having a trusted, well-respected arbiter to lead meetings and ensure good process makes great sense. Former Cape and Islands Senator Rob O’Leary, also a professor at Mass Maritime Academy, has graciously agreed to fill that role. His combination of experience, integrity, and neutrality make him uniquely well suited to the role.

Cape Cod’s shellfish economy and culture is diverse, full of entrepreneurs who are friends and neighbors. The last thing anyone would want is to see that vital industry consolidated, or undermined. On the contrary, the challenges shellfishermen face – marketing, health regulations, access to bottom, environmental and safety concerns – are the real threats to this great swath of effort and enterprise.

We know that, and that’s why we’re engaged. I encourage everyone to join in the process; learn more at massshellfishinitiative.org/participate.



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

deep at high tide, too shallow for most commercial vessels, effectively cutting off the fleet off from its only deep-water highway to the sea.” Read more [here](#).

