



# 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*

June 2018

## Fish Tales

### Fisherman Profile: Mike Anderson

"I will tell ya, this was the most romantic place I'd ever laid eyes on in my life," says Mike Anderson about Cape Cod, circa 1968. "This was rock-n-roll and fishing."



Anderson came after getting a college degree in English in Boston and spending summers on Plum Island, where he earned money commercial striped bass fishing.

"I rented a house on stilts on the marsh there above brackish water. It was this kind of idealistic lifestyle. No restrictions, people building any ramshackle things they wanted, all dirt roads at the time. It was spectacular."

Familiar with Cape Cod from teenage quail hunting, Anderson fell into the local fishing industry.

"I was just knocking around when I came down here and the Cape had a wildness that I was looking for. I never meant to settle here or become a fisherman," he laughs. "I don't know how that happened!"

*The story continues here...*

## Plumbing the Depths

**A packed meeting hall wants little fish, of big importance, to be protected**

All of about 100  
people who came  
out on the warm  
June night were  
there for one reason

## On the Horizon

We have lots of exciting stuff happening.



Summer happenings: Join us

at *Chatham Bars Inn* for our first *Dish on Fish* of the season on Monday, July 9. This ticketed event will be a cocktail-style reception including scrumptious local seafood hors d'oeuvres, beer, wine and champagne. Our next *Meet the Fleet* on Wednesday, July 25 will feature black sea bass.

*Reserve your seat today.* And what would summer be with the Hooker's Ball? Ticket sales are live for our *17<sup>th</sup> annual Hookers Ball on Saturday, August 4* under the Big White Tent at the Chatham VFW. We hope you'll join us for our most important fundraiser of the year!



Only four bibs left! Consider running

*Falmouth for Fish and Fishermen* in our inaugural debut at the 2018 New Balance Falmouth Road Race! Want to be part of our running team? Email *Molly Ogren* for more information.



The generous support of our

– to protect the Cape’s ecosystem and economy. They were there to let the New England Fishery Management Council know that mid-water trawlers should no longer be allowed to scoop up millions of pounds of herring just off our shores. In the process, the industrial-scale ships should no longer be able to take huge numbers of many kinds of forage fish, leaving little for larger animals to eat and shattering a strong and varied fishing industry.



Many in the crowd were on the water and remember when mid-water trawls, permitted as an experimental fishery, arrived two decades ago. They have seen cod, tuna, and striped bass suffer with the arrival of the trawlers and then seen those losses reverberate through the rest of the economy.

*The story continues here...*

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## Aids to Navigation

Students share stories and gain perspective from a long-time captain

“If we are representing the last generation of commercial fishermen on Cape Cod, we have failed.”

Those words are often said by John Pappalardo, CEO of the Cape Cod Commercial Fishermen’s Alliance, but one of the reasons there are fewer fishermen on the peninsula is that there are fewer role models.



When Captain Mike Anderson began his fishing career in Chatham 50 years ago, virtually everyone in town had a pair of boots. And the smell of fish was a heady thing. “You get real stinky fishing – if you catch them. In the old days when we came home, when the town was a fishing town, they would say it smells like money. It doesn’t smell like fish, it smells like money,” he told a class of entranced third graders at Harwich Elementary School last month.

*The story continues here...*

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## Charting the Past

Shanties by the Sea

The “tiny house” phenomenon has been all

sponsors help make our community programs and events possible! This month we want to especially thank **Marder Trawling Inc.!** **Hookers Ball** is not possible without their continued support!

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## On the Water



Many fishing spots have names that go back hundreds of years, others only decades, but many provide a glimpse into history and some quirky personalities over time. **Here** retired Captain Fred Bennett talks about the names – not the locations of course, no fisherman would do that – of some of the fishy places where he caught some fish.

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## On the Shore

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



Local councils award more than \$3 million annually in grants to more than 5000 cultural programs statewide. We are fortunate to receive grants for our radio program “Voices from the Wheelhouse” from multiple councils on the Cape: Bourne, Brewster, Chatham, Falmouth, Harwich, Mashpee, Orleans, Provincetown, Sandwich, Truro and Wellfleet. We do the show in partnership with WOMR, visiting with fishermen across the Cape for long-form conversations about their lives and times. Without grant support this important recording of oral history couldn’t happen and we are proud to be among

the rage for several years, but one type of mini-structure is fading into Cape Cod history: the fish shanty.



You can still see a few in places like Harwich's Wychmere Harbor, where a line of small wooden storage sheds for lobster pots fringe the parking lot, capped by a slightly larger wooden building at water's edge that houses the town's shellfish upweller. But shorelines or piers crammed full with bait shanties are now only visible in old photos and artistic renderings.

Used for centuries by working fishermen, the typical fish shanty was a small wooden building that allowed people to cut bait and work on hooks, lines and tub coils protected a bit from the elements, as well as offering a convenient, safe place to store gear. They also fostered a boisterous and purposeful camaraderie among fishermen.

*The story continues here...*

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## Over the Bar

### The telltales tell an exciting story

For years now, there has been a narrative about our fisheries that could be summed up as follows:



Woe is us.

Yes, times have been tough, for sure. But I'm tired of that stale old narrative. And much more important than how I feel about it, I don't believe it. The evidence I see says that a sea change is coming, in fact has started. This rising tide won't lift all boats but it will lift a lot of them, and included on those decks will be the next generation of independent Cape Cod fishermen.

Why do I say this? Here's why, starting with facts and figures, backed up with anecdotes and personal observations.

In 2017, fishermen landed almost 62 million pounds of fish on Cape Cod, which translates into almost \$74 million of value to the boats alone. That doesn't count fish landed by Cape Cod fishermen at other ports like New Bedford and it doesn't take into account how that \$74 million of fish ripples and multiplies in value as it moves into wholesale, retail, and restaurant businesses. There were 1867 commercial fishermen who landed that catch, and they made almost 58,000 trips to sea last year.

The people who generate that kind of economic activity are not some stereotyped old salts ambling around the docks tugging on beards and telling yarns while they lug

the many groups on the peninsula – from Wellfleet Porchfest to Wampanoag Day - who are able to bring more of the arts, humanities and interpretive sciences to our communities.



We aren't sure, but this might Chatham's last shark art extravaganza. Having artists design and bring to life shark cutouts has been a highlight in town for several years. Businesses and non-profits work with artists to create a shark, which is later auctioned off with half the proceeds going to the artist and the rest to help fund the programs and events of the Chatham Merchants Association. This year, because of security concerns, the sharks will only be trolling outside the Eldredge Public Library. Stop by and see our shark, painted by Mellissa Morris through a partnership with the Arts Foundation of Cape Cod.



With all that is happening in the world of so-called adults, sometimes we forget the interesting work being done by future leaders. For example, a group of middle school students recently spent a science writer's retreat weekend at Cape Cod Sea Camps, with help from a grant from the Friends of Chatham Waterways. The fifth, sixth and seventh graders spent time writing about whales, turtles and growing concerns about an increasing seal population – all topics we spend time talking about and working on here at the Alliance.

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## On the Hook

We do a lot of reading, searching through the

totes. Neither are they corporate types who send their profits to shareholders or executives via Wall Street. Fishermen by and large are smart, savvy, hardworking entrepreneurs with major business investments, dealing with cash flow as much as tidal flow. They might still make business plans on the back of a napkin but they also use spreadsheets, computer projections, and can tell you to the penny what the prices have been and what that means to their margins.

Just this past winter, we've seen more than a handful of fishermen spend hundreds of thousands of dollars investing in new boats and big makeovers of existing boats, buying new fishing permits and more quota. These are no gambling fools, believe me. They have assessed where we are, what they can do, and they are all in. By the way, when they walk into banks and credit unions, show their plans and net worth, they get financing.

Part of the reason for this hard-won optimism is growing hope that scientists and government officials who manage the fishery see that we need to improve our stock assessments, and we need to respect and support honest, accountable fishermen. Both goals would seem obvious and not so difficult to accomplish, but that's not the case. I see a new generation of fishery managers who "get it," who realize that fishermen and their wisdom must be part of the process, who know that people like Carlos Raphael should not be in the business, who want to level the playing field for the benefit of those who fish by the rules, who know that our stocks are coming back, who also know we can't allow destructive tactics like mid-water trawls (or cheating) wipe out the fertile mix of small fish that bring bigger fish to our shores.

I see Harwich and Chatham funding major harbor improvements and expansions, grappling with how commercial fishermen and recreational boaters share space and access. From Sandwich, Falmouth and Hyannis to Sesuit and Orleans up to Provincetown, I see ports where fishermen offload day and night, tourists and others admiring their work. I see respect for the effort and tradition.

And in close synergy with the "grow local, eat local" movement, I see a growing understanding that the wild fish our fleet brings home are a big cut above what passes for fish elsewhere. The harvest, like local produce, is worth a little more because it is so much more healthy and fresh, and that little bit more helps create the margin that keeps our independent fishermen afloat.

So it's not a matter of me seeing my glass as half full. My glass is filling up, nowhere near the brim but filling. Over the past decade there have been times when I thought I saw the bottom of that glass, and maybe we all did. Now I look up, see the telltales, and here's what they show:

Opportunity.



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

 Fishermen, and others, *worry* that a hotel development planned for Fishermen's Wharf will belie the popular spot's name.

 Some say the Maine's harvest of soft-shelled clams is on the decline – they blame climate change and a preponderance of green crabs. *This piece* talks about how growing clams like carrots may be the answer.

 Celebrity Chef Anthony Bourdain was known throughout the world, but the man who used food to connect people got his start in Provincetown in the 1970s. In the wake of his death by suicide, Provincetown fisherman Beau Gribbin *talks about meeting him and taking him fishing.*

 Fishermen on Cape Cod have *done a lot* to protect whales, and we have signed on to proposed legislation that provides money to fund research – with partnerships, such as those with fishermen, receiving priority – that works to prevent North Atlantic Right Whale deaths.

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

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