



# 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*

September 27, 2018

## Fish Tales

### A history of handlining connects Ted Ligenza with Chatham's past

Although Ted Ligenza grew up in New Jersey, son of a chemist and a homemaker, his grandmother lived on Main Street in Chatham (his mom went to Chatham High) so he and his sisters spent a lot of time here.

Considering his dad's profession, and that he majored in biology in college, the idea was that Ligenza would grow up and be a scientist.

Ligenza was fine with that – not that he didn't think about becoming a fisherman. He hung around the pier as a kid and was intrigued and impressed. Plus he enjoyed trout fishing as a youth.

He worked at the fish pier too. Back in the 1960s and '70s, one guy weighed fish that came in and two guys would nail the box together.

One day someone suggested Ligenza go bay scalloping. So he quit his \$11-a-day job at the pier and went scalloping, but that didn't work out as the captain soon realized he couldn't afford a crewman.

But then he went with Kenny Bloomer and came home with a full boat. He found he liked it and was good at it.

"All you need is a handline and a good brain and



## On the Horizon

We have lots of exciting stuff happening.



Please join us in welcoming our newest colleague Catherine Baker. Catherine joined our team in early August and her roots run deep in the sand of Cape Cod as she was raised in Dennis. Prior to joining us, Catherine was a team member of the Arts Foundation of Cape and Cod, Cape Cod Young Professionals and Cape Cod Academy, where she had the great honor of working with dedicated and passionate professionals that share her commitment to support the nonprofit sector on Cape Cod. She was most recently recognized as a recipient of the 2018 *Cape & Plymouth Business'* 40 Under 40 Award. Catherine looks forward to engaging our local leaders and businesses to protect our oceans and build a better future for our fishing community in her role as Donor and Community Relations Manager. *Reach out to Catherine and say hello!*



Want some new Fishermen's Alliance swag? We have new merch on sale until October 6, 2018. Click here to *shop to support.*

Thank you to Mark

you could make a living," he says.

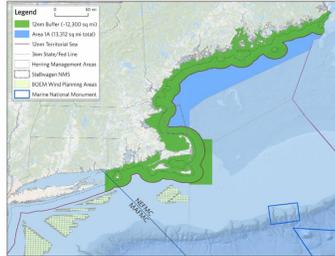
*The story continues here...*

## Plumbing the Depths

### Herring get hearty support at New England Fishery Management Council meeting

"This is a very good day."

Career fisherman Charlie Dodge had just witnessed the creation of what many feared the New England Fishery Management Council would delay once again: vital protections for Atlantic herring, a small fish that has a larger-than-life role in the health of the Cape's environment and economy.



The council took several steps. In a unanimous vote it adopted a "control rule" that will reduce the total amount of herring caught.

The council also overwhelmingly supported a 12-mile, year-round buffer zone off the coast from Montauk, New York all the way to the Canadian border, prohibiting large midwater trawls in those inshore areas.

John Pappalardo, council member and CEO of the Fishermen's Alliance, also moved successfully to add additional protections off the Cape Cod coast. Two large blocks beyond the 12-mile limit create a buffer that extends close to 25 miles, protecting key spawning areas.

*The story continues here...*

## Aids to Navigation

### Supporters hope that dogfish by another name sells better, and benefits consumers

Longtime fisherman John Our knows some people who love calamari, but won't eat squid.

Doesn't matter that they are same thing; calamari just sounds better.

"Dogfish" seems to provoke a similar visceral reaction; people turn their noses up at



Leach, and his son Sean, who joined us at last night's Meet the

Fleet to share their unique approach to the lobster industry by creating an innovative business model that sells lobsters wholesale to the highest buyer. A special thank you to them for also donating the lobster for the tasty lobster mac n' cheese, *Chatham Bars Inn* for their delicious bites, and *Hog Island Beer* for their craft brews. Meet the Fleets are not possible without the support from our exclusive sponsor (now formally known as) *Gibson Sotheby's International Realty*. Our final Meet the Fleet of the season will take place on Wednesday, November 28. More details will be provided in the coming weeks on our [events page](#).



Herring Hurrah! In celebration of the New England Fishery

Management Council's vote in favor of protecting herring and pushing midwater trawls 12 miles offshore, please join us at the *Red Nun Bar & Grill in Dennis Port* on Thursday, October 18 from 5 – 8 p.m. so we can extend a thank you for your unwavering support of this issue for more than 15 years. Drop-in for 10 minutes or stay for a few hours, we'd enjoy seeing all of you there. Everyone is welcome! This celebration is complimentary (first drink on us!), however RSVP is required. Please tell us your coming by registering [here](#).



The generous support of our sponsors help make our community programs and events possible! This month we want to especially thank *UBS Financial Services, Inc.*

## 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?

the name.

"I've always thought that if you changed the name you would make it more attractive," Our said. "It would only help."

Our's feeling is backed by research. Fishermen, processors and others have spent years trying to turn local palates on to dogfish. Not that it's all about the name; there are a host of other problems with making the abundant fish a popular choice, including the lack of nearby processing facilities, but inroads have been made.

The popular "Pier to Plate" program launched by the Fishermen's Alliance in 2017 introduced more diners to dogfish (and skate) by working with restaurants to promote it. Supporters hoped to increase the domestic demand for dogfish, as now 99 percent of this plentiful, white fish is being shipped to Europe and Asia. In England it takes the starring role in many pubs as fish n' chips – called "rock salmon" there, which might help prove the point.

[The story continues here ...](#)

Photo credit: David Hills/Fishy Pictures

---

## Charting the Past

### Remembering the Hurricane of 1938, the storm without a name

Florence.  
Harvey.  
Katrina. Bob.  
The names speak to the destructive power of wind and water, but for the people



of New England the most devastating hurricane may have been the unnamed storm that battered our coastline 80 years ago this week.

The Great Hurricane of 1938 came as a surprise to many, which seems incredible in our era of constant weather news and satellite projections. Weather forecasting and storm warnings systems of the time were technologically unsophisticated, counting on reports from ships at sea for much of their meteorological data. The weather bureaus couldn't give us advance notice weeks ahead of landfall.

So in September of 1938, when a storm formed across the Atlantic near Cape Verde and made a slow journey toward America, residents of Southeastern New England remained unaware that, once near our coast, its track changed. The storm was no longer making a benign turn back east into the mid-Atlantic, but instead was barreling north toward Long Island, Connecticut and Massachusetts.



Having been fishing dozens of times, but never having actually fished, I have few (if any) skills. Still, Captain Ted Ligenza let me try handlining – albeit with just one hook to start. Now I finally understand why people love fishing.

After I began to know when a fish was on the line, bringing several up, Ligenza allowed me to jig for cod using two hooks. When I dropped the newly-outfitted line, I felt a hard tug. Since I thought I had two fish instead of one I didn't think too much about it and began pulling up the black, twine-like line. It was a lot, lot harder than I envisioned; did I say a lot? So I leaned back with all my weight and then the line started spinning out of my grasp the other way.

Feeling a little silly, glancing over at Ligenza who was having no problems with his fish, I tried harder. No avail. I couldn't get the fish on the boat and by this point Ligenza was walking over thinking I actually may have my biggest fish yet. He had a gaff since I was not at the point where I could bring a fish up and gaff it so it wouldn't come off the line. That was a bridge too far.

But just as he came near, my struggle ended and my fish showed up on deck. There was a small problem, however; it was only the head.

---

## On the Shore

This community thrives in

Meteorological reports the morning of Sept. 21, 1938 were woefully mistaken about the force, speed and direction of the storm. One junior forecaster with the US Weather Bureau, Charles Pierce, using newer methodology, suspected the hurricane was enroute to New England, but more veteran meteorologists overruled him. They relied on an established understanding of typical patterns of tropical force storms in the Northeast. This would prove to be a tragic mistake.

[The story continues here ...](#)

---

## Over the Bar

### The strengths of this industry, and community

For a long time now, I've been reacting against a certain perspective about our fishing industry as a whole, and the men and women who make it work.



We hear it a lot, from well-intentioned, sympathetic people around the community, around the country, who don't mean to be negative or condescending. Sometimes I even hear echoes of it from within the fleet.

Here's how it goes: The fisheries are a shadow of what they used to be. The poor people who still fish for a living are stubborn throwbacks, living on borrowed time, an endangered species, battling an inevitable economic tide, still trying to do something that worked 50 or 100 years ago but now is a romantic relic. They are the last of the hunters in a society that no longer celebrates or supports the hunt. They try to remain independent in a society that no longer celebrates or supports independence.

Funny, but when I look around at the people and businesses we work with at the Fishermen's Alliance, I see something profoundly different.

I see hardworking entrepreneurs, independent business people who are making a go of it.

I see a steady stream of major investments in boats, gear, quota, and infrastructure, often in the six-figure range, which means that I see smart business plans that satisfy lenders, qualify for good loans, and create access to capital.

I see nimble people diversifying their businesses, focusing on smarter tactics, more profitable species, better marketing, and stronger relationships with wholesale and retail buyers.

large part because of a constellation of non-profit organizations and engaged businesses.



We just had to mention this dinner, which gives you the opportunity to enjoy the catch of local fishermen, prepared by great future chefs – also known as high schoolers. The 4th Annual Farm & Sea-To-Table Dinner & Auction will happen on Sat., Oct. 6, from 6-9 p.m. at Nauset Regional High School. Tickets are \$15 for students 14-18, \$35 for adults, and \$200 for a table of six. Presented by the Culinary Arts Program at Nauset Regional High School, the benefit helps their Eat Local/Eat Clean Food Initiatives to update their kitchen with modern, efficient commercial appliances and have a fund available to help students with field trip and international culinary travel expenses. Click [here](#) for more information.



And if you aren't hungry yet, which is hard to believe, Oysterfest is coming up as well. *Wellfleet OysterFest* is brought to you by Wellfleet SPAT, Shellfish Promotion and Tasting, Inc., a non-profit started in 2002. SPAT's mission is sustaining Wellfleet's shellfishing and aquaculture, and *Oysterfest* is a two-day annual celebration of the town's famous oysters, clams and its deep-rooted shellfishing traditions. This year it's on Oct. 13 and 14 from 10 am to 5 p.m., rain or shine. SPAT creates educational activities designed to improve knowledge and awareness of shellfishing traditions and techniques. To date, SPAT has given more than \$458,000 back to the local community, almost all of it raised from the Fest. The Fishermen's Alliance is lucky enough to have a table there so please come and say "Hi." We just had to mention this dinner, which gives you the opportunity to enjoy the catch of local fishermen, prepared by great future chefs –

I see mortgages getting paid, truck loans covered, enough income to support a nice vacation now and then or even a down payment on a cabin in the woods somewhere special.

I see guys (mostly, because the industry is mostly men) who have become very sophisticated about using technology to track trips and locate fish, reporting to and satisfying government regulators who oversee their industry (much as government regulators oversee many industries).

I see politically savvy individuals who come together to advocate for their immediate business interests in public hearings, as well as looking ahead a decade, a generation, pushing for what the green folks refer to as “sustainability.”

Of course I see issues and problems. Yes, the stocks of some of our popular species are at historic lows, and that void is being filled by other species that are not as valuable or popular. Yes, climate changes and government management continue to create uncertainty about the future. Yes, it’s harder now to find a boat, jump onboard, grab the wheel, go fishing, work hard, and make a good living without having a bankroll to start.

But the “good old days” weren’t always so great either. And throughout, the intelligence and creativity of the fleet has not waned. If anything, this generation of fishermen is, of necessity, sharper and quicker to adapt to challenges that in some ways are new but in many ways remain constant as tides.

Does this sound like a pitiful tale of woe? Far from it. This is an industry and a way of life that persists, and will survive. It contributes more to our economy, culture, history, and self-image than any other industry on Cape Cod.

So a sympathetic pat on the back is not what’s in order. What’s called for is support, celebration, appreciation, and respect.



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

also known as high schoolers. The 4th Annual Farm & Sea-To-Table Dinner & Auction will happen on Sat., Oct. 6, from 6-9 p.m. at Nauset Regional High School. Tickets are \$15 for students 14-18, \$35 for adults, and \$200 for a table of six. Presented by the Culinary Arts Program at Nauset Regional High School, the benefit helps their Eat Local/Eat Clean Food Initiatives to update their kitchen with modern, efficient commercial appliances and have a fund available to help students with field trip and international culinary travel expenses. Click [here](#) for more information.



If you haven’t noticed, we are all about celebrating the Cape’s culture. Of course we are focused on our commercial fishing heritage, but surfing is also a part of the personality of the Cape. The *Orleans Surf Film Festival* is an annual event that “celebrates surf culture and all that is positive about riding, sliding, and gliding your way through life,” organizers say. The festival showcases local and national films and also has a pop-up museum of Cape surf memorabilia with an extensive display of boards. This year’s event, which includes an auction to raise money for scholarships, will be held at Hog Island Brewery in Orleans on Friday and Saturday, Oct. 19 and 20, beginning at 5:30 p.m. Both nights will feature a selection of films, including local shorts and feature length productions. Saturday is especially kid friendly.

---

## 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.



Fishermen have to deal

with a lot of varying pressures. *This article* touches on those and quotes two former alumni of the Fishermen's Alliance: Ben Martens, now in Maine, and Nancy Civetta, from Wellfleet.



The waterfront has been rife with reports of feisty seals and even stories of seals biting people. Some say the population needs to be reduced. *This article* from down south suggests that may be happening naturally.



A mate on a fine boat of Provincetown had a lucky escape this month after getting caught in gear and going overboard. The Coast Guard was involved in the rescue and *this article* offers a sense of how dangerous commercial fishing can be.

---

