Landings, vol. 21, no. 10

Maine Lobstermen's Community Alliance
FOOD INDUSTRY EXPERT TO ASSIST NEW LOBSTER MARKETING COLLABORATIVE

By Melissa Waterman

By mid-fall, the transition from the Maine Lobster Promotion Council to the new Maine Lobster Marketing Collaborative (MLMC) should be in full swing. Department of Marine Resources (DMR) Commissioner Pat Keliher has engaged John Sauve, co-founder of the Food and Wellness Group in Portland, to coordinate the transition process. Sauve was instrumental in drafting "Project Maine Lobster" in 2012 for the state’s Lobster Advisory Council, which laid the groundwork for the new MLMC.

"John’s role is to assist me as we oversee this transition," said Keliher. "My obligation is to get this law [which created this new MLMC] implemented on time."

Sauve worked for 23 years with Friendly’s Ice Cream Company, whose corporate headquarters are in Wilbraham, Massachusetts. "I worked in the restaurant operations side of the business for a dozen years and then moved to the marketing department for the last half," Sauve said. He became the vice-president of marketing for the company and in 1992 joined The Hale Group, a consulting firm in the Boston area that provides strategic counsel to the food industry. It was through The Hale Group that Sauve began his work with the Wild Blueberry Association of North America (WBANA), an experience which uniquely prepared him for his work with Maine’s lobster industry.

The transition process for the new MLMC has a tight set of deadlines. It must first establish the eleven-member board of directors and organizational structure, then prepare a three-year marketing plan for the Legislature by January, 2014.

Sauve is quite clear as to his role in this transition period. "My assignment is to work with the Commissioner to provide the MLMC board with the tools, the information and resources it will need to deliver on the mandate of the legislature," Sauve said.

MLPC COMPLETES LOBSTER BRAND STRATEGY

By Marianne Lacroix

After evaluating the marketing efforts for Maine lobster, the Maine Lobster Promotion Council (MLPC) Board of Directors recognized the need for a comprehensive brand strategy for Maine lobster – a differentiating, well-defined and credible strategy to set direction and guide marketing and tactical implementation.

A year in the making, the result is a forward-thinking brand strategy that can serve as the foundation for new marketing success.

Development of a comprehensive brand strategy is a logical first step in the marketing process, and one recommended for the Maine lobster industry by both the Moseley Report and the Trade Adjustment Assistance Program (TAA) for lobstermen in Maine.

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October signals the official arrival of fall and with it some big changes for the lobster industry and our coastal communities. The columns and articles in this issue of Landings speak to the vastness and intensity of issues now facing the lobster industry. Lobstermen had to deal with everything but the kitchen sink in September, from the controversial People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals video and proposed whale rules to preparing for the transition to a new marketing collaborative and closure of the inshore herring fishery.

Beginning October 1, the Health Insurance Marketplace will be open for business. While the Affordable Care Act has been in play since 2010, this next phase will be felt by all. In this issue of Landings, we explore what the Affordable Care Act will mean for Maine’s lobstering communities. Our guest columnist Kevin Lewis delves into what these changes will be for Maine residents, in the MLA pages, we explore how the lobster industry might cope with these changes. J.J. Bartlett, president of the Fishermen’s Partnership Support Services (FPSS) in Massachusetts, discusses the efforts his organization has taken to act as a human resources department for fishing communities. MLA has partnered with FPSS as a health insurance Navigator to assist lobstermen in Maine in accessing the new health insurance opportunities.

Landings features two articles related to the highly-anticipated transition from the Maine Lobster Promotion Council (MLPC) to the Maine Lobster Marketing Collaborative (MLMC), which will begin in October. We feature a story on John Sauve’s role helping to guide the transition from the Maine Lobster Promotion Council to the MLMC, and a column by Mari-anne Lacroix on the results of MLPC’s recent work to develop a brand strategy for Maine lobster.

As a counterpoint to the intensity of these issues, Landings editor Melissa Waterman sat down for an interview with Diane Cowan, the passionate director of The Lobster Conservancy. We also meet a young lobsterman, Matthew Huron, from York who is this month’s “New Recruit.”

Landings also continues with its series “From Trap to Plate.” This month we explore vertical integration as a tool to control costs and increase profits, and to extent to which this is practiced in Maine’s lobster industry. We also continue with reports on the Maine Lobstermen’s Community Alliance’s field work, identifying tools and techniques in place that ensure the lobster industry maintains its highest quality. One of the key elements that contribute to the health of harvested lobsters is the amount of oxygen they can extract from seawater. In our “So You Want to Know” story, we find out what dissolved oxygen is and how it can be made available to lobsters on the boat and on the dock.

Finally on a sad note, we bid farewell to a well-known and beloved staff member, Annie Tselikis. Annie headed up the TAA program for MLA over the past few years. She has played an integral role in launching the Maine Lobstermen’s Community Alliance and developing its programs, including the Maine Lobstermen Leadership Program, Claws for a Cause and the Lobster Quality program. Annie will be leaving MLA in mid-October to work on the Eliot Cutler campaign. We wish her well. We will truly miss her passion, energy, enthusiasm and strong work ethic. I hope you enjoy this issue!

MLCA fosters thriving coastal communities and preserves Maine’s lobstering heritage

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GUEST COLUMN: Fishing Partnership Support Services teams up with MLA

By J.J. Bartlett

I am excited to announce that the Maine Lobstermen’s Association (MLA) is teaming up with Fishing Partnership Support Services (FPSS) to bring you clear, up-to-date, and accurate information about your healthcare options. While health insurance can be almost as complicated as fishing regulations, there is nothing confusing about our partnership. We will work together to provide you with the support that you need to make the best healthcare decisions for you and your family.

Some of you may already know that FPSS is a non-profit company founded by fishermen and their families. Since commercial fishermen don’t have corporate support or a huge Human Resources department working on their behalf, our mission is to promote the health and well-being of New England commercial fishing families. For over 16 years FPSS has helped thousands of fishermen in Massachusetts access services such as health coverage, preventive care, and safety training. We owe our success to the FPSS Navigators. They are highly trained so they know what insurance companies have available, and they know how to connect you to those services. Most importantly, they know the challenges you face because they are part of the fishing industry themselves.

April Gilmore is our Navigator in Maine. April comes from a commercial fishing family, she has worked in a family-owned retail seafood shop, and she has extensive experience in providing outreach to Maine lobstermen. You can reach her at the MLA office by calling (207) 967-4565 or stopping by the office at 203 Lafay-ette Center, Kennebunk.

In Massachusetts we have seen the benefits that can come with healthcare reform. Before the Fishing Partnership was formed in 1997, nearly half of all fishing families were uninsured. Those who had insurance often had terrible coverage that barely covered expenses when fishermen needed medical care. Fishing Partnership reduced the rate of uninsured fishermen to 13% and, after state-wide reform, over 97% of Massachusetts citizens have health care insurance.

Soon, fishing families in Maine will have new options. Many will find coverage more affordable and more fair—for example, insurance companies will no longer be allowed to keep people with preexisting conditions from getting insurance. FPSS and MLA will work together to make sure that you have the best information available on these new coverage options. Then you will be able to make the right decisions for you and your family.

If you are interested, we will help you through the application process. You have from October 1 and March 31, 2014, to sign up, and coverage can start as early as January 1, 2014. Please call April Gilmore any time at the MLA office, stop by the MLA office in Kennebunk, or look for us at MLA meetings and tradeshows. We look forward to working with you!

ENROLL207.COM

Your Maine connection to the new Health Insurance Marketplace

enroll207.com is a new Web site being developed and supported by the Maine Health Access Foundation (MeHAF) to complement resources available on Maine’s federally-facilitated Health Insurance Marketplace at www.healthcare.gov.

On www.enroll207.com, you will be able to enter your town or zip code in the “Find Help” tool and see a list of local certified assister organizations around the state. Beginning October 1, assisters will be able to help review options for health insurance, eligibility for premium assistance, and help complete the application for coverage which begins January 1, 2014.

As the initial Marketplace open enrollment period (Oct.1-March 31, 2014) gets underway, additional Maine-specific resources will be added to the enroll207 website and social media pages, including educational events and enrollment fairs.

So, if you need help navigating the new Health Insurance Marketplace and Maine-specific information, go to enroll207.com.

When you’re ready to pick a plan and enroll, go to the Marketplace at www.healthcare.gov.

Phone assistance is also available in Maine through the Consumers for Affordable Health Care Help Line at 1-800-965-7476.

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to these three metal level plans, there is also a catastrophic treatment benefit for people under the age of 30 or who qualify for a financial hardship waiver. At the Marketplace, www.healthcare.gov, people can also identify their eligibility for financial assistance toward their premium – the advanced premium tax credit or what has been called “premium subsidies” – which can be immediately applied to reduce the amount of monthly premium. Many people in Maine will be eligible for the assistance but this premium relief is only available in the absence of credible and affordable employer-sponsored coverage. For the first time, many individuals and families in Maine will have an unprecedented opportunity to: Go to one site – the Health Insurance Marketplace; set up an account; fill out the application with information about self and dependents, expected income in 2014, current health insurance, get a determination of what programs or advanced premium tax credits might be available, compare options – Qualified Health Plans – to determine what best suits their needs and budget, and enroll. In addition, some people (individuals with adjusted income between $11,490 and $28,725, and higher income ranges based on family size) are also eligible for reduced out-of-pocket spending, or cost-share reductions. So while a plan design may list a co-payment of $35, for instance, based on the cost-share reduction, the co-payment may actually be just $15. It’s important to note that the cost-share reduction is only available for the Silver-level plans, and so, while the premiums are less for Bronze, a person may get better benefits at lower total costs with a Silver-level plan. Other things to look for include whether the plan has a combined medical and pharmacy out-of-pocket limit – all Maine Community Health Options (MCHO) plans do – as opposed to separate limits, which can result in greater out-of-pocket spending. Wellness benefits, tobacco-addiction treatment benefits, the first three behavioral health visits without cost-sharing, and reduced and eliminated cost-sharing for the management of some specific chronic conditions – such as COPD (Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease)/Emphysema, diabetes and hypertension – are all examples of additional benefits that MCHO offers Maine people that are found in our various plan designs. With the advent of the Health Insurance Marketplace comes opportunity for many here in Maine to receive more robust health insurance coverage and to receive help with monthly premium costs or costs associated with physician visits or prescriptions. Concurrently, Maine people will need to become more engaged consumers about their own health insurance, what their best options might be, and how they can get the necessary information and tools to make informed decisions about health coverage. Web sites including Healthcare.gov, enroll207.com, and the Kaiser Family Foundation (kff.org) are sources of information. These Web sites also have tools to help people regarding premium tax credit eligibility, levels of the subsidy, and costs of various plans for different circumstances. Some helpful tools, websites, and resources are listed here to help you with your own explorations. In addition, there are many local resources available to provide counsel and guidance on the new options for Maine people; Navigators, Certificated Application Counselors, Federally Qualified Health Centers, and, of course, Maine’s existing licensed brokers. The Maine Lobstermen’s Association and the Western Maine Community Action Navigator Consortium (which includes eight Community Action Programs across the state) have been named the Navigators for Maine and will be reaching out with information and expertise to their constituencies and to communities across the state. Certified Application Counselor organizations will also be assisting Maine people with the process of understanding the new landscape and enrolling in health insurance. Many of the Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs), community health centers, hospitals, and other groups – such as CarePartners will be serving in this capacity. Consumers for Affordable Health Care and other support, access, and advocacy organizations across the state continue to be wonderful resources on these topics. Many insurance brokers as well are receiving training on these topics to assist their clients. Public libraries, some college settings, and other venues will be offering community forums to provide the public with information. While we are heading into uncharted waters with the unfolding of the Health Insurance Marketplace, there are many willing sources of assistance to help navigate and evaluate the best course for you, your family and/or your business. Open Enrollment just started on October 1, and will extend through March 31, 2014, so there is plenty of time as well. Please call us at 855-MCHO-4-ME or visit www.maineoptions.org. Within any questions about Maine Community Health Options, our plan designs, and our benefits and coverage. We are also happy to help you identify a Navigator, Certified Application Counselor organization, Federally Qualified Health Center or other resource in your area.
NEW RECRUIT: Deafness no handicap for York man

By Shelley Wigglesworth

Twenty-one-year-old York resident Matthew Huron was born in May, 1992, and when he was just seven months old his family learned that he was deaf. “We have no idea why Matthew was born deaf. A cat scan was performed and confirmed that everything is physically present but for some reason the nerve from his ear canal to his brain stem just doesn’t work,” said Huron’s mother Tamber Lewis.

When Huron was three years old a successful cochlear implant surgery was done. With both his commercial lobster license and welding certification, he began to master his newly acquired gift of hearing and processing sound. He then began speech therapy and extensive work with an oral teacher for the deaf, and was able to attend public school. He graduated from York High School in 2011 with both his commercial lobster license and welding certification.

“I was fortunate to have Mr. Zack Daniels, an oral teacher of the deaf, as my one-on-one personal teacher since Kindergarten,” Huron said.

It is quite apparent that Huron has never allowed his hearing impairment to dictate his life. When he was 13 years old he began working as an apprentice on a lobster boat in York and a few years later he began hauling lobster traps by hand in a skiff. He now has a 22-foot Eastern boat named Huron with a machine-powered hauler. “This boat is not year-round. My goal is to have a big enough boat to lobster year-round,” he said. Currently Huron has 75 traps of his own to manage while also working for three other captains. He said he particularly appreciates the work he does with the other captains and is grateful to be “learning the trade and earning the respect of the other fishermen,” while saving money for a larger boat. “My license allows for 800 traps but that costs big bucks for the boat and gear,” he explained.

Huron’s mother spoke proudly about her son completing the Department of Marine Resources Apprentice program at just seventeen. “This required Matthew to lobster and work on gear over 200 days, putting in a minimum 1,000 hours, and successfully complete the U.S. Coast Guard Fishing Vessel Drill Conductor Training Course. Matthew was a full-time student during the school year so this entire student lobster apprentice program was completed during the summertime. All of Matthew’s teenage summers he was on board a lobster boat ten to twelve hours a day, five to six days a week,” she recalled.

A go-getter with a contagious positive attitude, Huron describes himself as “hard working, responsible, caring and funny,” and his life surely exemplifies all of those qualities. In his free time he enjoys extreme sports such as skateboarding, snowboarding, ziplining and dirt bike riding, but on the ocean is where he prefers to be. “The ocean is beautiful — it is so freeing to be on the water, no four walls holding me back,” he said.

Another important aspect of Huron’s life is his personal mission. He is passionate about promoting awareness of and helping to provide opportunities for other hearing impaired and deaf people, particularly children.

Huron said his mother and his brother Robby have been the driving force behind him and all of his accomplishments thus far. “They have always been there for me. They love and help me and I would not be where I am today if it wasn’t for them, my mother especially. She is extremely supportive and dependable,” he said. This type of support and success is exactly what Huron wants for other people who share similar hearing challenges: their own opportunities to reach their personal goals, whatever those goals may be. In order to do this Huron and his mother have established a Web site which documents his life story in hopes of helping others and encouraging those with and without hearing impairments to achieve their goals and dreams. The site also provides educational information on deafness to the public. “It is very important to me that people visit my Web site. It will not only help me but also help many others,” Matt said. While he continues his work lobstering and his mission to help others

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Reduced amounts of DO can lead to mass mortalities, like those seen in the Gulf of Mexico," he said, referring to large numbers of deadfish and other animals that wash up on beaches from an area dubbed the "Dead Zone.""The animals suffocate when there isn’t enough DO. The water becomes what is called anoxic," Bricknell said.

Bricknell said the Gulf of Maine is lucky that it has such cold waters because it is able to hold more oxygen. "Cold water holds more DO than warm water," he explained. "If the Gulf of Maine were to warm up, it would only hold seven or eight or nine milligrams of oxygen per liter of water." He said the Gulf typically holds around 14 or 15 milligrams of oxygen per liter of water at its current temperature.

But temperature isn’t the only thing that affects oxygen levels, warned Bricknell. He said algal blooms use up dissolved oxygen leaving little to none for animals. "Decreased DO levels leave animals stressed and vulnerable to disease."

"Lobsters are happy at 10 milligrams per liter dissolved oxygen," Bricknell explained. "That occurs around 10°C or 50°F. When DO decreases to 6 or 7 milligrams per liter, that’s when lobsters start to be in trouble." Bricknell said that distressed lobsters are easy to spot in a tank. "When stressed, the lobster will move to the surface, stand upright, and move around a lot to try and find more oxygen."

As Tselikis has traveled around the coast looking at holding systems and testing DO levels, one recent visit stood out to her. Tselikis visited the Cranberry Isles Co-op in September after visiting many other buying stations earlier in the month. "I was really impressed with their system and the general handling practices by fishermen and the crew who work with Co-op manager Mark Nighman on the wharf. They take great pride in their product and are doing everything they can to be innovative and proactive with the current market conditions."

The Cranberry Isles Co-op has a three-inch water pump that picks water up below the surface. The pipe is then reduced to two inches, which increases the volume and speed of the pumped water. Nighman said the water is brought back up to the surface and picks up air from small holes in the line. That air, mixed with water, is then shot back down below the lobster crates. "We’ve had this system in place for four or five years now," Nighman said. "I actually stole the idea from Timmy Harper at Southwest Lobster. Before
By Melissa Waterman

Diane Cowan’s vegetable garden resides in fish totes. Ten black plastic boxes line the side of the dock on Friendship Long Island, adding a splash of green to the grey shingles of the adjacent house and shed. Cowan fills each box with composted seaweed and soil and carefully plants a medley of tomatoes, lettuces, and other vegetables which appear to be thriving on this early September morning. As a visitor heads toward the house, a young dog barks loudly behind a window. “That’s Sula, she’s my girl,” Cowan says by way of introduction.

Cowan is known by various names: the Lobster Lady, the Lobster Doc, and as the head of The Lobster Conservancy, a nonprofit founded by Cowan in 1996. In the latter role Cowan galvanized volunteers throughout Maine in a quest to identify the coastal nursery grounds of Homarus americanus. Trained by Cowan, volunteers set one-meter-square boxes into a beach area at the lowest low tide each month and then count and measure all the juvenile lobsters found within the box. They do this faithfully, year-round, to gather data from more than 24 sites along the coast. Her Juvenile Lobster Census has produced an uninterrupted series of data on postlarval and juvenile lobsters, data that is crucial to understanding the future abundance of lobsters in the state.

So what led Cowan to dedicate her life to lobsters? “I knew when I was eight I wanted to be a marine biologist,” Cowan explained matter-of-factly while talking in the kitchen. Calendula flowers and kale seed pods competed with books on foraging and sheets of paper on the cluttered table. Sula lay on a rug below a window that opened on the adjoining lobsters. Lobster boats bringing in traps chugged by on their way to the fishing wharves of nearby Friendship.

That ambition might seem a bit odd for the daughter of a corporate salesman. Cowan and her two siblings lived in seven different locations before she turned eight as her father, a salesman for American Cyanamid, moved the family for work reasons. Eventually the family landed in New York City, New York, when Cowan entered second grade, and stayed put. “There was a great big wood lot behind our house,” Cowan recalled. “It’s all housing developments now.” She spent her free time wandering in the woods, creating tree houses and paths on her own. “I was an independent person even then. I was always doing things alone,” she said.

Cowan’s grandparents owned a cottage on a lake in Michigan where Cowan and her siblings spent time each summer. “I had a boat that was powered by paddling with your feet. I would head out to the lake and catch all sorts of things. My older brother would go bass fishing. My younger brother liked to play golf!” she said. She loved her summers in Michigan, spending as much time as she could swimming and exploring the life of the lake.

Soon Cowan entered high school and suddenly her world was different. “I hated high school,” she said quietly. “I didn’t like the suburbs or going to. So I ended up at Binghamton [in western New York],” she explained. Cowan was an eager student. “I wanted to know everything about everything but I knew I couldn’t. So I focused on lobster,” she said. It would seem unlikely that any of her professors at this inland university would be interested in lobster but fortune smiled on Cowan. “I walked into the office of my animal behavior teacher [Stim Wilcox] and there were two huge lobster tanks! He taught a course on animal behavior at Woods Hole,” she said.

Cowan ended up studying the habits of lobsters rather than under the tutelage of Professor Wilcox. His teaching habits were of the old school of biologists, who emphasized the importance of watching and recording what can be seen in nature rather than data from high-tech machines. Eventually he introduced Cowan to a colleague at Boston University’s Marine Biological Laboratory in Woods Hole who focused on lobster behavior.

After visiting Jelle Atema’s lab, Cowan knew that was where she wanted to be. “You know, it’s funny, but my great-grandmother, my grandmother and my aunt all visited Woods Hole and talked about it. I was fed tales of it since I was a kid,” Cowan added. Promptly after graduating from college in May, 1983, Cowan moved to Woods Hole. She worked in Atema’s lab that summer as a volunteer, then became a paid technician.

“I just loved it there. It was such a wonderful place,” Cowan said. She spent nine years doing research on lobster molting and reproduction while pursuing her master’s degree and eventually Ph.D. from Boston University. Through her research she discovered that the dominant signal that triggers mating among lobsters does not come from the female but rather from the male. The females select among the pheromone-producing males to choose a suitable mate. “That was published in the Journal of Chemical Ecology. And that was as far as I went with that,” Cowan said. During her years at Woods Hole, Cowan had teaching fellowships, working with both children and adults. She found that she truly enjoyed teaching so after she received her Ph.D. she began looking for jobs in which she could continue to study lobsters and also teach. She happened upon a notice for a teacher of animal behavior to replace a Bates College professor.

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STEAMING AHEAD

A lobsterman is not known for his love of federal regulations. You want to be left alone. And you certainly don’t want the federal government telling you where to spend your hard-earned income. The cynics say that is exactly what the Affordable Care Act (ACA) prescribes, while the optimists say it is a major step toward ensuring all Americans have access to affordable health care. Either way, and despite lots of confusing political rhetoric, health care reform is here and it will seriously affect the lobster industry.

Nearly half of Maine lobstermen in some parts of the coast are without health insurance. Many others get by with high deductible catastrophic plans. So I truly hope that the Affordable Care Act will bring some positive change to our industry.

After all, having health insurance is a good thing, right? Seems like a no-brainer, especially when you work in one of the nation’s most dangerous professions. Not only are lobstermen vulnerable to on-the-job injuries and illness, the added reality is that they are not paid when they don’t work. Without access to healthcare, those hernias, sore backs and aching hips and shoulders are neglected. Many lobstermen work with constant pain because no work equals no pay.

For those who are wondering why the MLA is involved in health care reform, it’s simple. Supporting lobstermen and their communities is part of our mission, and helping lobstermen stay well is fundamental to having a healthy and prosperous lobster industry. We know that many lobstermen want health insurance because we get many calls from people asking for it. As a fleet of small businessmen and women, complying with the ACA will be challenging. Lobster fishing, and therefore cash flow, is highly seasonal. Incomes may vary widely from year to year, so determining potential subsidies or penalties will be a challenge. We know that many lobstermen are new to the world of health insurance and are going to have questions. The MLA may not have all the answers, but we are sensitive to the unique issues facing lobstermen, and we will be sure that you get the information you need to make the right decision for you and your family.

In order to do this, the MLA has received federal funding to serve as a “Navigator” for the lobster industry. That means that MLA will have one staff person dedicated to helping lobstermen and their families understand new ACA requirements. April Gilmore, who recently completed work on the TAA program, will be MLA’s Navigator. Like the rest of us, April is new to the Affordable Care Act, but has spent the last month getting certified as a Navigator and learning as much as she can about the caveats of the law so she can serve as a resource for lobstermen.

Some of you don’t have to worry about this. Remember that if you qualify for a government program like Medicare (at age 65), or MaineCare, or you are covered by a qualified plan through a spouse's employer, you are all set.

Understandably, there is much apprehension and angst among lobstermen about what health reform will mean. Health care reform has brought some needed change to the health insurance market and may provide some palatable choices for lobstermen and their families through the Individual Marketplace.

The good news is that the ACA requires health plans to cover ten essential health benefits which include things like emergency services, maternity care, mental health, preventative and wellness services. Gone are the days when you had to purchase high deductible plans which require you to pay for just about everything out of pocket. The ACA sets an out-of-pocket costs maximum amount at $6,350 per individual or $12,700 per family for in-network expenses with no lifetime limits. You also cannot be denied health insurance for pre-existing conditions. Catastrophic insurance plans will be available for some people under age 30.

The new law also requires that health insurance be afford- able. It sets a sliding scale of subsidies, known as premium tax credits, which caps the percent of your income that goes toward your health premium. Premiums must not exceed 9.5% of an individual’s income. In general, those who earn less will spend a lower proportion of their income on health premiums than those who earn more.

If you think you may qualify for a subsidy, you have to purchase your plan through the Individual Marketplace located at www.healthcare.gov. Two companies, Anthem and Maine Community Health Options, are offering a variety of plans with varying premiums and levels of coverage to choose from. Those who deal with chronic health issues might consider higher premium options which cover more health care expenses, while those who are in good health might choose a lower premium plan which covers less. Open enrollment began on October 1 and will continue until March 31, 2014.

If you currently have health insurance through a private in- surer, you can continue to get coverage there. Four compa- nies are offering plans in Maine: Anthem, Mega Life, Maine Community Health Options and Harvard Group. But, if you choose to purchase insurance this way, you should check with your broker or insurance company to be sure that your plan is qualified. Plans in place before March 23, 2010, may be grandfathered.

The bottom line is that if you don’t purchase health insur- ance in 2014, you will pay a penalty which will not exceed 1% of your household income in 2014. It will increase in future years.

If you have questions, or just need help getting started, call the MLA office and ask for April. You can also begin your search for more information at www.enroll207.com. Many of you will want to look at options through the Individual Marketplace, and consult your accountant for advice. In the end, MLA is here to make sure that you have the resources you need to make the best decision for you and your family. That decision is up to you.

Stay safe on the water.

Patrice

Maine Lobstermen's Association Update

MAINE LOBSTERMEN’S ASSOCIATION UPDATE

MIL SUBMITS COMMENTS ON VERTICAL LINE RULES

The MLA submitted formal comments to the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) on the Proposed Rule to reduce risk of entanglement from vertical lines. MLA comments were based on in-depth discussions with the lobster industry during the scoping and public comment period for the rules, as well as on-going discussions with MLA’s Board and members. MLA also worked closely with Maine DMR to ensure a unified voice from Maine’s lobstermen. The MLA put forward lobstermen’s concerns and frustration over the need to implement additional whale rules given the lack of definitive data regarding how whales are entangled in the vertical gear and the impact that the Maine lobster fishery has on whales. Lobstermen consistently state the rarity of seeing right whales off the Maine coast. MLA also expressed lobstersmen’s worry about the unintended consequences of implementing new regulations without understanding the impacts of all regulations as a whole, such as existing regulations that require weak links and sinking rope which has led to increased gear loss which, in turn, could be contributing to entanglements as ghost gear.

MLA reminded NMFS that Maine lobstermen continue to struggle with the existing sinking groundline requirement which poses significant safety, operational and economic challenges.

The MLA supported NMFS’ move away from...
from its one-size-fits-all, broad-based rulemaking approach, in favor of an area-specific, risk-based approach for the proposed vertical line rule, and agreed with the agency’s approach that would place the most onerous management measures in areas where the risk is greatest.

**Trawling Up Measures**

The MLA supported the framework for trawling up submitted by the state of Maine because it was strongly supported by the industry and it removes a significant amount of vertical line from the water in a manner that allows our fleet to operate safely and without excessive cost. While the change will be significant for some lobstermen and less so for others, it is a good overall framework for the lobster industry.

The MLA requested that NMFS adopt the coordinates for the 6-mile line proposed by Maine DMR. The line proposed by Maine DMR is located at a point where the bottom transitions from the rough rocky area which characterizes inshore waters to a less rugged, gravel and mud substrate more typical of offshore areas. Lobstermen have consistently stated that they would be forced to fish their gear around the edges of the closure, creating a wall of gear. It would also dramatically increase gear conflicts. This minimal improvement in conservation does not offset the loss of access to prime fishing bottoms which did not include closures proposed in the preferred alternative.

The MLA strongly opposed the gear marking scheme proposed for Maine’s exempted state waters. Gear marking does not directly provide any conservation benefit to whales. The gear marking proposal attempts to provide a marking scheme that does differentiate gear fished in the exempted versus non-exempted waters, but it does not achieve this. The proposed gear marking scheme is operationally impossible because Maine lobstermen shift gears and gear from exempted into non-exempted waters. Lobstermen who shift gear in deeper waters either have to reduce their catch and income and potentially increasing the management area would cause unquantifiable economic harm to a four-month period. Lobstermen must fish over concentrated areas on less productive bottom areas during this time, giving up much-needed income and potentially increasing the risk to whales.

The MLA stated that the proposed Jordan Basin closure is at least based on sound science, but however, the MLA does not support the boundary of this closure extending into Area 1. Extending this closure into another fishing management area would cause unquantifiable economic harm to Area 1 lobstermen and would be extremely difficult to enforce. Closures should not be considered in the absence of data linking gear fished in those areas to known entanglements.

**Gear Marking**

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In response to the video released by PETA, the MLA did numerous interviews to discredit PETA’s reputation and claims against the Maine lobster industry with a variety of news outlets, including the Portland Press Herald, Bangor Daily News, Channels 6 and 8 News, New England Cable News Network and Maine Public Radio to discredit PETA’s claims against the Maine lobster industry. They also released the following statement: The recently created video by People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) purporting to reveal the way lobsters are killed at a Rockland lobster processing facility is “just another publicity stunt to raise money,” according to David Cousins, presidente of the Maine Lobstermen’s Association (MLA). “This is the same group that wanted to open a lobster exhibit center in Maine a few years back. They aren’t to be taken seriously.” Lobstermen in Maine take care to protect the lobsters they harvest, which last year brought more than $340 million in revenue to the state, according to David McCarron, executive director of the MLA. She noted that Maine’s lobster industry is highly regulated for conservation, food safety and quality standards, adding that the industry exceeds most of these standards. “Lobstermen take great pride in their work and employ numerous conservation practices, such as returning female lobsters to the sea and using vents to allow undersized lobsters to escape the traps,” noted McCarron. Maine’s seafood processors produce high-quality products much sought after by consumers throughout the country and the world, she said. “The lobster industry will continue to look to the best available science to guide our standards. We will not base those standards on an extremist agenda.” In 2011, the state Legislature amended a law to allow boat owners to process and sell lobster parts such as knuckles and claws. Prior to that change, seafood processors could only process the entire lobster, which the Legislature found put those companies at a disadvantage to those in other parts of the country. Since 2011 several companies in Maine have ventured successfully into the market by selling Maine lobster products in ready-to-eat forms, providing essential jobs and revenue to the state. MLA DIRECTORS MEETING SUMMARY The MLA meeting on September 10 began with a discussion of the MLA vessel insurance program through Smithwick & Mariners. The MLA Board discussed the need to ensure that the MLA program offers the best possible rates for our members. Scott Smithwick stated that MLA’s program is highly competitive for vessel lobster boats, but will review the program and present proposals to improve the program at the October meeting. Representatives from Maine Community Health Options (MCHO) provided an overview of the Affordable Care Act. MCHO is a new coop offering health insurance plans in Maine for 2014. April Gilmore, who has staffed MLA’s TAA program for two and a half years, will be working as a Navigator to help members understand options under the Affordable Care Act. April is undergoing a federal Navigator training program and will serve as a resource to answer questions for Maine’s lobstermen regarding getting access to healthcare through the Marketplace. Enrollment in the Health Insurance Marketplace begins on October 1 and ends on March 31, 2014. MLA board voted not to sign onto the Cover Maine Nor coaliteslet. MLA Board reviewed and discussed at length, the association’s draft position on the whale rules. The MLA will submit formal written comments summarized above. MLA Board members were encouraged to think about nominations for the Maine Lobster Marketing Collaborative (MLMC) board of directors. The Maine Lobster Promotion Council will be dissolved in October and replaced by the MLMC. Nominations for the three lobster dealer seats and two public member seats should be forwarded to Sarah Cotnoir or Bob Baines for consideration by the Lobster Advisory Council. Nominations for the four harvester representatives, who may be a lobsterman or someone serving on a lobster board, should be made through the zone councils. The seven zone council meet in September. The MLA V-notch Survey will take place the week of October 14 through 20. Postcards will be mailed to MLA members in early October. The proposal to dredge and blast off Pratts Island in Soumpoint has been withdrawn, so the project is not moving forward. David Cousens attended a meeting to discuss concerns over a proposed dredging project for Searsport which would remove close to 1 million cubic yards by dredging to a depth of 40 feet in that harbor and disposing the spoils in one of two locations in Penobscot Bay. The MLA will get more information on this project at the Maine DMR meeting in October, but is concerned that this project is far more expansive than a maintenance dredge. Annie Tselikis updated the Board on her work visiting lobstermen and buying stations to discuss quality issues. She has been gathering lobstermen with real time feedback on dissolved oxygen and temperature levels in their tanks, and discussing approaches to improve conditions where lobsters are caught. Annie announced that she has resigned from the MLA, effective in mid-October. The Board thanked her for all of her contributions to the association. The next MLA meeting will be Oct. 1 at 5 p.m. at Darby’s in Belfast.

LOBSTER ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING Deirdre Gilbert provided a brief update on legislation that passed during the last session, particular, the Maine Lobster Marketing Collaborative (MLMC). She explained that the department has retained the services of John Saune to guide the transition to the MLMC, which became effective on October 9. Shawn will compile highlights of various lobster reports and concepts for development of the marketing strategy. His work will help front load the new MLMC and bring the new board up to speed quickly. The Commissioner stressed that Saune would be compiling information for the MLMC Board to consider; the decision making will lie with the new board. The LAC is responsible for offering nominations for five seats on the new MLMC board; three dealers and two public members. The MLA discussed the need to find the right people who can ensure that the MLMC is effective. The nominees brought forward by the LAC will go to the Commissioner, who will ultimately appoint the new board. The list of nominees put forward by the LAC was extensive and included Luke Holdren, Tom Adams, Cubby Pettegrew, Pete McAleney, Tim Harkins, John Ready, Stephanie Nadeau, John Petersdorf, Hugh Reynolds, Brett Taylor, Emily Lane, and for public members Vaughn Stinson, Paul Parity, Mike Cote, Karon Cushman and Stephen Broomfield. The Commissioner stated that LAC that they could continue to bring names forward until appointments are made in October. DMRheld zone council meetings during September to solicit nominations for the four har- ter seats. The Commissioner is continuing to meet with lobstermen and has traveled to Maine’s islands, which were largely missed during the 2013 outreach meetings. He plans to schedule additional regional meetings this winter to keep his promise to continue to listen to the industry.

The issues raised in the GMRI limited entry report (2012) were discussed with the zone councils this fall. Many are concerned with the amount of time lobstermen must spend on the wait list before they can get a license. The Commissioner stated that he will not be putting forward a bill on limited entry this session because he has not heard any consensus from the industry on this issue.

Lt. Jon Cornish provided an update on marine patrol issues, including penalty structures, administrative suspensions and retention of officers. The Department is exploring the potential to use an “X number of strikes and you’re out approach” to violations for lobster and other fisheries. This approach has been effective in the elver fishery. The DMR is exploring changes to the administrat- ive suspension process which could allow the Commissioner to take a li- cense for up to three years in order, to match the suspensions recommended for specific violations. Marine Patrol has had a difficult time attracting and retaining officers, they are also reviewing a variety of options to improve the situation.

Comments on the Proposed Rule for vertical lines are due September 16. DMR willsubmit formal comments in support of the trawling up, opposing closures and new gear marking, advo- cating June, 2015 for an implementa- tion date. They are exploring how to resolve issues raised to ensure that ports and waters are not exposed to trawling under federal whale regulations, and that lobstermen are not burdened with trawling up in the waters around islands.

MLA PARTICIPATES IN CANADIAN MARITIME PROVINCES LOBSTER PANEL MLA’s director was interviewed by the Canadian Maritime Provinces Lobster Panel, which was appointed this year to conduct analyses and recommendation on a number of key questions and issues related to lobster markets and prices.
TOP TEN REASONS WHY YOU SHOULD SUPPORT THE MLA

1. RELIABLE
Things that don’t work, don’t last. Maine lobstermen organized the MLA in 1954, forming the largest fishing organization in the state. Nearly 60 years later, the MLA remains accountable to its membership of commercial lobstermen and maintains its successful track record in advocating for Maine’s lobster industry.

2. TRADITION
It’s important to know where you come from. The MLA is part of the centuries-old traditions of Maine lobstermen: independent, self-sufficient stewards of the resource who share values of family, fairness and hard work. The MLA’s efforts reflect these traditions every day.

3. ACCOUNTABLE
The door is always open; the phone is always answered. The MLA is accessible to all its members, through its monthly board meetings and annual meeting every March. All MLA meetings are open for members to attend.

4. EFFECTIVE
MLA’s actions have positively affected every Maine lobsterman. Whether it’s passage of the law that made sternmen self-employed workers, a prohibition on oil and gas refineries off Maine’s coast, or crucial lobster conservation measures, the MLA has led the industry in getting things done. The MLA remains the “go to” resource for reliable information on issues that affect Maine’s lobster industry.

5. TRANSPARENT
MLA understands that its work reaches beyond its membership and may affect all Maine lobstermen. That is why the association mails its newsletter each month to every commercial lobsterman in Maine through Landings, and makes it available on the web for the general public to enjoy.

6. CLOUT
With the support of you, our members, the MLA makes things happen in Augusta, regionally and in Washington, D.C. The power of one lobsterman is limited; the power of many is tremendous.

7. COLLABORATIVE
It’s hard to make a difference if you work alone. So the MLA works with industry, science and other organizations to ensure that the needs and perspectives of Maine lobstermen inform our advocacy work. In addition, MLA started the non-profit Maine Lobstermen’s Community Alliance to further education, research and charitable work in Maine’s lobster industry.

8. GRASSROOTS
The MLA is governed by a board of 23 commercial lobstermen who were elected by the membership to represent the industry. MLA Board members travel to monthly meetings and attend a variety of meetings around the state on their own time and on their own dime because they are deeply vested in our future.

9. RELEVANT
To make a difference in this constantly changing world, the MLA has to stay on top of the issues. The MLA facilitated a study on factors affecting the profitability of the industry and provided seminars on business training, marketing and lobster quality to give lobstermen the tools they need to remain profitable.

10. PROGRESSIVE
After 59 years of representing Maine lobstermen, the MLA knows the industry and understands the issues. So that’s why we are always staying one step ahead of the game, thinking about where you and your children and your grandchildren want to be in the years ahead.

Time to renew your MLA membership

MLA MEMBERSHIP FORM

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Dwight Carver, Beals

Bottom line: MLA has your back.

If you make your living in the lobster industry, there is no other organization that can provide this peace of mind, knowing that your best interests are always being looked after.

“I graduated from high school in 1973. I was a member then. And I don’t think I ever stopped. This is our business. You have to find out what is going on, and the MLA is a great way to do that.”

John Williams, Stonington

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Sea Grant’s Extension Agent Dana Morse organized two years of educational workshops for lobstermen, their wives or partners and sternmen, traveling throughout the state to work with them in person. During any two days of the survey week, lobstermen record the number of females, eggers, V-notch, short and oversize females on a data card. The information is kept by the MLA and is available to scientists and managers. TAA continued from page 1

required to complete twelve hours of training, then meet with a business counselor to draft a business plan. At the close of the program when they had completed a long-term business plan, participating lobstermen could receive $2,913 in compensation. The MLA and Maine Sea Grant organized two years of educational workshops for lobstermen, their wives or partners and sternmen, traveling throughout the state to facilitate the workshops. MLAs education coordinator Annie Tselikis and Sea Grant’s Extension Agent Dana Morse oversaw the TAA program. “We had a total of 2,432 participants in Maine,” said Tselikis. “What’s really exciting is that 2,086 of those lobstermen completed their initial business plan. That’s a tremendous achievement!” A full 78% of those who began the program completed all components. Tselikis added, “The timing for the TAA program was great, too, by getting fishing families some financial assistance. But it was also a sustained chance to talk with fishermen along the coast about some really important issues, like marketing and handling,” explained Morse. So what did these lobstermen learn? Training workshops covered the waterfront, so to speak. Through in-class workshops or online, lobstermen studied topics such as how the lobster market works, quality and handling techniques for lobsters, marketing and branding methods, production efficiency, alternative business enterprises for lobstermen, and creating a business model. “I am really proud of this program, the participants, and the instructors with whom we collaborated,” Tselikis said. “I think the curriculum was strong and the business planning and profitability components are very timely for helping people to weather some of the challenges that we are currently facing in the industry.” After completing the twelve hours of workshops, lobstermen then met individually with a business counselor to learn how to construct a business plan. Each licensed lobsterman in the state is his or her own independent businessman yet for many, planning for that business takes a back seat to fishing. Delving into this new arena was daunting for some. Tselikis credits workshop leaders and the business counselors for making that segment of the program so successful. “Our instructors were really fantastic and provided a really high level of expertise to the program. David Hill from Coastal Enterprises Inc. [in Wiscasset] was not only a great business planning counselor for participants, he also delivered most of our business planning workshops,” she commented.

At the end of the program, 1,904 participants had completed a long-term business plan, either for their lobstering business or a new business venture. Some lobstermen are considering opening retail seafood shops, others are considering a move into aquaculture. “There were definitely a lot of seeds planted in this program,” said Morse. “Some of them are going to grow immediately, but I think that a lot of other ideas will come to grow over time.” Tselikis reflected that the program certainly had its surprising moments. “Probably my most memorable time was being in Machias with Tim Harkins from Rocky Coast Lobster for a product quality and handling session,” she said. “One of the participants was looking through the presentation before we got started and I heard him mutter to his wife, ‘I know all of this stuff. This is silly.’ But after Tim was done teaching the class the same guy piped up. ‘I really learned a lot today. Everyone who handles a lobster in the state of Maine should have to take this class,’ he said. That was great.”

IT’S V-NOTCH SURVEY TIME!

The annual MLA V-notch survey will take place from October 14 to 20. In 1982, the MLA began collecting data on the number of v-notched lobsters present in traps to measure the impact of this conservation program on the lobster population. In 2002, lobstermen from Massachusetts and New Hampshire joined this data collection effort. The survey takes place in early October each year. Early October was chosen because there has historically been a good run of eggers and V-notched lobsters at a time when the weather is still good enough to haul regularly. During any two days of the survey week, lobstermen record the number of females, eggers, V-notch, short and oversize females on a data card. The information is kept by the MLA and is available to scientists and managers.

IT’S V-NOTCH SURVEY TIME!

Participation in the V-notch Survey is voluntary, but the more lobstermen participating, the better the information! MLA members in Maine automatically receive a data card in the mail; others can receive a data card by contacting the MLA office or on the Massachusetts Lobstermen’s Association Web site. Simply record the appropriate information from two days of trap hauls during the week of October 14-20. Mail your data card back to the MLA. The results will be made available through the MLA newsletter. For more information, call Sarah Paquette at the MLA at 207-967-4555 or email sarah@mainelobstermen.org.

TAA PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Total number of participants: 2432
Total number who started 12 hours of training: 2143
Total number who completed trainings: 2095
Total number who completed initial business plan: 2086
Total number who completed full program: 1904

78% completion rate

Egged lobsters

Maine Sea Grant Marine Extension agent Dana Morse organized many of the TAA training workshops. Sea Grant photo.
the guidance to build a three-year strategic and tactical marketing plan. Much of the research as well as some sound recommendations have already been done here and in Canada. So my work is to help the board with the review and decision making process,” he said. “I think it will be a good process!” Sauve will draw on his work with The Wild Blueberry Association of North America (WBANA) as he guides the lobster industry through its transition to the MLMC.

“WBANA was formed in 1981 and represents the growers and processors of wild blueberries in both the U.S. and in Canada. They had a 19-member board from Maine and Canada that worked together on marketing wild blueberries globally,” Sauve explained. His consulting assignment was to help an industry management team analyze the state of the industry and identify marketing approaches for increasing demand. “By 1992 it was clear that the supply of wild blueberries was on the increase and that demand needed to outpace supply for the industry to remain profitable at all levels. The marketing approaches were not strong enough at the time to set the industry up for future growth and success,” he said. Maine harvested 39.5 million pounds of wild blueberries in 1991. By 2001 that number had increased to 75.2 million pounds; in 2011 Maine growers produced 91.1 million pounds. Canada saw an even stronger uptick in that country’s wild blueberry harvests. The combined total yearly harvest of Maine and Canada is now reaching about 240 million pounds a year.

“My job was to help the industry think through the marketing elements that could drive profitable market growth,” Sauve said. Ultimately the Association’s board asked Sauve to lead the organization in its new marketing endeavors. He and his wife moved to Southwest Harbor on Mt. Desert Island in 1993 and set up the Association’s office in Bar Harbor. Sauve threw himself into developing new marketing strategies and programs that would help create demand for wild blueberries. “My message to the board was ‘Think like a brand’ and not just as a commodity,” he said.

As it happened, fortune soon favored wild blueberries.

“There were several health-related discoveries that set the stage for good things to happen,” Sauve explained. Dr. Ronald Prior, a scientist at the USDA Agricultural Research Service at Tufts University in Boston, discovered that blueberries held very high levels of antioxidants based on an Oxygen Radical Absorbance Capacity test (ORAC) test. In fact, blueberries were the number one fruit in antioxidant activity. Antioxidants counter the free radicals that are created by our bodies during everyday activities such as eating, breathing or exercising when we burn oxygen. Those free radicals essentially age our bodies.

Dr. Prior published his results in a scientific publication which David Yarborough, a blueberry expert from the University of Maine, happened to read. “He faxed that to me one day in December, 1996,” Sauve recalled. “The next month we went down to Boston to meet with Dr. Prior and three other researchers.” Sauve knew he had a potentially powerful tool to apply to the newly created wild blueberry brand – he just wasn’t sure exactly what it was yet. “Sometimes you get lucky and opportunity knocks, so we opened the door,” he said. “Even though no one really cared about antioxidants back then, we were going to make them care. We told that story nationally and internationally.”

The Association employed promotion agencies in each country to spread the word in the markets it wanted to promote wild blueberries. Certain elements of the blueberry story played better in specific countries than other elements did. Sauve pointed to Japan as an example. Among the many positive health attributes of wild blueberries, some research showed they improved eyesight. That fact captured the interest of Japanese media and consumers. ‘That’s good for the eyes’ story linked to the emerging antioxidant data catapulted awareness of wild blueberries in that market,” Sauve explained. “That and the industry’s focus of product quality helped wild blueberries go from 3 million to over 20 million million pounds in just three years.”

The health story and a strong value-added brand marketing strategy against the number one competitive product, the large cultivated blueberries, helped to define the playing field and the game plan for successfully marketing wild blueberries over the last 10-15 years with the industry growers and processors continually improving all aspects of the business and supporting WBANA.

In 2004, Sauve again moved on, first as a managing director for Food and Nutrition with Swardwick Marketing Group in Portland and then as co-founder of the Food and Wellness Group. The strategic and tactical marketing of wild blueberries in the U.S. market remained with Sauve and his firm through 2012. He was contracted to assist the Lobster Advisory Council in its analysis of brand issues in 2011.

“John will provide the new MLMC board with information drawn from all the recent reports in order to assist them as they start to draft marketing strategies,” Keilher said. “The board will also have to consider its staffing needs as well as meet the January 15 deadline to have a three-year work plan to the Legislature. So I certainly want the board to hit the ground running.”

MAINE LOBSTERMEN’S ASSOCIATION

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Present your MLA membership card at the following businesses and receive generous discounts!

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Dover, NH – 20% off propeller repair; discount vary by manufacturer for new propellers, shafting and other hardware.

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Seabrook, NH – $5 off each barrel on multiple barrel purchases at the Seabrook NH location with proof of MLA membership.

Commercial Fisheries News
Deer Isle, ME – Discounted annual subscription rate for $18.75 with MLA membership noted on check.

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Seabrook, NH – 10% discount on all in stock items for MLA members.

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Friendship, ME – 5% off list price on traps at the Friendship store.

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Kennebunk, ME – 10% off to harvesters on MLA merchandise.

Maine Camp Outfitters
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Maine Lobstermen’s Association
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Bath, ME – Free admission to MLA members.

McMillan Offshore Survival Training
Belfast, ME – 10% discount on USCG Drill Conductor training.

Mount Desert Oceanarium
Southwest Harbor; ME – Licensed Maine lobstermen & families come in free.

National Fisherman
North Hollywood, CA – Special annual subscription rate of $12.95 use J12MLA code for discount.

Newcastle Chrysler Dodge-Jeep
Newcastle, ME – 15% off parts and service. Receive $200.00 additional discount on all new and used vehicles. Please bring ad copy in at time of sale.

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Searsport, ME – Free admission.

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Winter Harbor Co-op
Winter Harbor, ME – 10% off fresh picked lobster meat.
I would like to thank the outgoing Board of Directors for the Maine Lobster Promotion Council for their hard work and dedication to the Maine lobster industry. They have volunteered countless hours to evaluating the challenges facing the Maine lobster industry and structuring the most effective marketing program possible.

Emily Lane, Calendar Islands Maine Lobster – chair
Cathy Billings, Lobster Institute – vice-chair
Vaughn Stinson, Maine Tourism Association – treasurer
Patrice McCarron, Maine Lobstermen’s Association – secretary
Mike Cote, Bar Harbor Foods
Jim Dow, lobsterman Bass Harbor
Patrick Keliher, DMR
Peter Miller, lobsterman Tenants Harbor
John Petersdorf, Linda Bean’s Perfect Maine Lobster

Sincerely,
Marianne Lacroix
Maine Lobster Promotion Council

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MLPC SAYS GOOD-BYE

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Sincerely,
Marianne Lacroix
Maine Lobster Promotion Council

Institutions. Futureshift ultimately produced a 200-page research report detailing respondents’ awareness and attitudes towards lobster, in particular, and their buying decisions in general.

After analyzing the data gathered through the research phase of the process, Futureshift developed strategic recommendations for the Maine lobster brand. One option played on the brand’s current strengths while a second option pushed for change based on customer needs. The MLPC board members were unanimous in their adoption of the forward-looking brand strategy as the best approach.

If implemented, this brand strategy will create cohesion as well as guidelines and a path to growth. Most importantly, it provides the industry with the potential to change its current pricing dynamics.

Following this six-month study, the MLPC can now recommend a strategy to the industry. It results from a review of our industry’s internal values and core competencies followed by an extensive interviewing program of buyers and industry observers around the world. The chosen strategy is innovative, offering change that is in tune with market needs. It provides a truly differentiating position for Maine lobster from other lobster producing regions as well as other shellfish and proteins. Implemented, this brand strategy will create cohesion as well as guidelines and a path to growth. Most importantly, it provides the industry with the potential to change its current pricing dynamics.

The strategy is built around key characteristics of the industry. The research showed that chefs and retailers across the country have strong positive perceptions of Maine and know that for lobster, it’s as local as they can get. They are intrigued by the traditions of our lobstering communities and they respect the resource conservation steps that harvesters have taken over the years. These key characteristics represent authenticity, quality and trust.

While every strategy has to acknowledge where an industry is now, it also has to be forward-looking so that we all know the direction in which to go. Our new brand strategy responds to the needs of food buyers by adopting core principles that are important to customers.

MLPC board members unanimously agreed that Jon Stamell should present the brand strategy to the new Maine Lobster Marketing Collaborative board of directors for consideration as they move forward in developing a marketing plan for Maine lobster. An executive summary of the complete strategy report will be available online in the near future. The board hopes that the good work completed this year will serve as a foundation for marketing success moving forward.
By Melissa Waterman

Even in the highly traditional world of lobster fishing, things are changing rapidly. Not only is the ocean altering, becoming more acidic and warmer decade by decade, but ways of selling lobsters are changing as well. To help lobstermen better understand the market mechanisms that affect the price paid for their catch, we continue this series focusing on the movement of lobster from the trap to the plate.

You see it every week at the local farmers’ market: healthy-looking purveyors of locally grown lettuce, artisanal cheese, and grass-fed beef or chicken products. You talk to the people who make these items and learn more about how they grow what they grow and sell what they sell. There’s, on a very small scale, are vertically integrated companies. Business majors all learn about vertically integrated companies. They stand out in American history because of their names: U.S. Steel, AT&T, Mobil Oil Corporation. These behemoths of U.S. business quickly figured out that there was money to be made from owning all parts of the chain that lead from the original item to the consumer.

Mobil Oil Corporation is the classic vertically integrated company. Founded first as Standard Oil of Ohio in the 1870s by John D. Rockefeller, Mobil (now Exxon Mobil) quickly gained control of the land in which oil deposits were found, the companies that made the equipment for extracting the oil, the trains that carried the oil to the refineries, the refineries, later the tanker trucks that moved the oil to the gas stations, and the gas stations themselves. No part of the supply chain that transformed unrefined oil into a consumer product was owned by any company other than Mobil.

Vertically integrated companies achieve several things. The first is control of costs. There are no middlemen among links in that supply chain. They are all part of the same larger company. The second is quality control. Since all sectors of the chain lie within the overview of a single entity, it is easier to set and maintain quality standards than it would be to try to enforce those among independent suppliers. Starbucks Coffee is an example of a vertically integrated company whose focus is entirely on maintaining the quality of the product at every stage of processing. The third is assurance of supply, be it coffee beans or oil deposits. A vertically integrated company knows that it will have whatever raw products it needs, when it needs them, because it is supplying those resources, not another company.

In the Maine lobster industry, Linda Bean’s Perfect Maine is an example of a fledgling vertically integrated company. While the company does not own lobster boats itself, it contracts with lobstermen throughout the coast to ensure a steady supply of lobsters. Maine’s owner-operator law requires each lobster boat owner to hold a license and operate the vessel, which prevents true vertical integration in the lobster industry. Linda Bean’s Perfect Maine owns land and wharves in key ports, such as Vinalhaven and Port Clyde. It has its own trucks to transport lobsters to its own factories for processing and freezing. It even owns its own restaurants in Freeport, at the Portland Jetport and at Epcot Center in Orlando, Florida. Through ownership of these elements of the supply chain, the company can ensure a high-quality product while keeping production costs in check.

Some companies use a different model to ensure a profitable place in the market. Employee-owned companies are businesses in which the employees own a majority of the company’s stock. They vote to elect members of the board of directors; the board then hires the company’s managers. Publix Supermarkets is perhaps the best-known of employee-owned corporations. The Florida-based company has 52.8% of the grocery store market share in that state, compared to 14.5% held by Walmart, according to a July, 2013 article in Forbes magazine. It operates in five southern states and has begun expanding into North Carolina and other mid-Atlantic states.

Employees in the company receive dividends twice each year based on Publix’s earnings. The company offers its stock to employees through various plans. This gives the employees an incentive to work hard and re—selling the end result — gasoline, steel, telephones — to the consumer.}

Maine Lobster Company is another employee-owned company, though strikingly different in character than the multi-billion-dollar Publix corporation. The company was started in 2009 by a group of Chebeague Island lobstermen. The lobstermen had already created their own business in 2004 to sell their collective catch to lobster buyers. They realized, however, that they were still missing out on the true value of their lobsters. That value came from the consumer, not from the various middlemen who sold the lobsters through the supply chain. So, with assistance and investment from the Island Institute, the owners of Stonewall Kitchen, and a few private interests, they formed Calendar Islands Maine Lobster Company. The goal of the new company is to turn the lobstermen’s harvest into gourmet food items desired by consumers and to distribute them to stores and other locations where those consumers can buy them.

Part of the company’s appeal comes from the storyline that accompanies its products. Calendar Island emphasizes that the lobster it uses is sustainably harvested. It gives background on its lobstermen, Casco Bay and the lobster fishery on its website. The company has also produced its own short videos about lobstering for distribution through YouTube.

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Setting up a vertically integrated lobster company or starting one owned solely by the employees may not be on the menu of most lobstermen, yet these examples show that it can, and has, been done.
Annie Tselikis is hitting the road. The 31-year-old education coordinator of the Maine Lobstermen’s Association (MLA) will take up her new position as field officer for eastern and northern Maine for Eliot Cutler gubernatorial campaign in mid-October. “It’s been such a great experience,” Tselikis said about her time with the MLA. “I really liked the balance between being in the office and out in the field. It has been very good for me personally and professionally. I’ve seen what people in the industry deal with day to day.”

“Annie has been a tremendous asset to the MLA,” said Patrice McCarron, executive director of the MLA. “She’s incredibly dedicated and passionate about Maine’s lobster industry and will be sorely missed by many in our industry.”

Annie began her job at the MLA in 2011 as coordinator of the Trade Adjustment Assistance Program (TAA) the world of commercial fishing being. The successful program has helped to drive thousands of miles visiting lobster wharfs around the state for the quality program, documenting how lobsters are handled on boats and on the dock and the effect such handling has on price. “She’s right out there, very straightforward and down to earth,” said David Cousens, MLA president. “She’s approachable, easy to talk to and she knows what she’s talking about.”

“I think the MLA is a great asset for the state and for lobstermen,” Annie said. “It has the ability to look at the big picture and that’s really important.” The potential of the MLA and the new Maine Lobstermen’s Community Alliance is tremendous, according to Annie. “They have the potential to do innovative programs that will be helpful for the industry. I can’t wait to see how the Leadership Program goes or the quality work. I think it [the quality standards program] will have real value to everyone in the supply chain.” She admits to some sadness in leaving the MLA. “It’s about the people for me. I was initially drawn to the MLA years ago when I met Patrice and David. Over the last several years I’ve had the great opportunity to work with all of the directors and active members of the MLA. It has been an incredible experience and a lot of fun. It’s really hard to leave.”

Good-bye Annie! MLA photo.

Tselikis said about her time with the Gulf of Maine Research Institute for a short period, taking time out from that position to work in Eliot Cutler’s 2010 campaign. In 2011 she was recognized by the Portland Press Herald as one of their “40 under 40” young professionals who have made a mark in their communities. From 2007 to 2010 Annie was the community coordinator for the Penobscot East Resource Center in Stonington. Earlier Annie was an Island Institute fellow for a year in Stonington where she worked with the local economic development committee and the co-directors of the Stonington Opera House. “And before that I was a deckhand on the Casco Bay Lines for two years,” Annie relates cheerfully.

During her tenure with the MLA, Annie also organized several new programs under the umbrella of the MLA’s sister nonprofit organization, the Maine Lobstermen’s Community Alliance. Annie really took the lead to set up the Claws for a Cause program, the Maine Lobstermen Leadership Institute, and the Quality Certification program,” McCarron explained. This summer Annie drove thousands of miles visiting lobster wharfs around the state for the quality program, documenting how lobsters are handled on boats and on the dock and the effect such handling has on price. “She’s right out there, very straightforward and down to earth,” said David Cousens, MLA president. “She’s approachable, easy to talk to and she knows what she’s talking about.”

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“I am all over the place right now, storing my boat over here and my traps over there. But you’ve got to start somehow, right?”

New Recruit continued from page 5

By Melissa Waterman

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- Troy Stanwood, Steuben, ME

Built the Best – Troy’s view - “Friendship Trap is building traps the way they should be built, to catch and to last”

Built to Last - Tired of replacing traps after just a few years? Troy’s still fishing Friendship traps that are 13 years old!

Built Your Way - Troy’s view - “Friendship Trap ... will work with ya to build what you want!”

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Cowan continued from page 7

on sabbatical. “It was a perfect fit. I loved the administration, my colleagues and the students. It was wonderful,” she said.

But Bates was located in Lewiston, Maine. How would a lobster-loving biologist connect her students to marine creatures from that location? “One day I visited Lowell’s Cove [in Harpswell] by chance,” Cowan explained. “I saw two kids on the beach flipping over rocks and playing with the baby lobsters.” Cowan had a brainstorm: she would bring her students down to the beach to do the very same thing. “I wanted to give the students an experience like I had at the laboratory at Woods Hole, observing and quantifying what they saw,” she said. So Cowan and her students piled into a college van each month at the time of the lowest low tide, whether that was at 3 a.m. or in the middle of the day, to go find baby lobsters on the beach in Harpswell.

For two and a half years, Cowan continued teaching at Bates College. She had her own laboratory, her students and her exciting new field studies in Harpswell. When the college decided to hire a tenured professor for her position, she was devastated. She found an apartment to rent overlooking Lowe’s Cove and took a part-time teaching job at the University of Southern Maine. And she continued sampling juvenile lobsters by day and then waited tables at Cooks Lobster House on Orrs Island, where she set her schedule once again around the tides. Cooks Lobster House closes for six weeks each winter. Cowan used that time to return to Woods Hole. Colleagues working at the Northeast Fisheries Science Center allowed her to use the office of scientists who were away at the time, so Cowan could enter and analyze her lobster data. “They were so good to me, they truly adopted me,” Cowan said.

Ever the teacher, Cowan soon started luring waiters and waitresses from Cooks Lobster House to come to Lowell’s Cove with her to conduct samples. Then she talked a few local lobstermen into recording data about catches in the vicinity. She became a member of the local Conservation Commission and successfully applied to the Maine Community Conservation Commission. Cowan moved to the Conservancy. For some time it operated a non-profit organization, “Cowan said. “Are we going to change? Change will come in ways that we didn’t expect. I didn’t really want to get so big,” Cowan admitted.

Today Cowan’s activities are less frenetic than in the early days. The financial downturn of 2008 made a huge dent in the Conservancy’s annual budget as private donations dried up. Still, she wants to continue the long-term time series on post-larval and juvenile lobsters. But she can’t.

“My sites are buried by sea level rise,” Cowan said. “We were able to set it all up and it worked, but the lobsters were using up the system. We can hold 150 crates of lobsters, but the lobsters were using up all of the oxygen and were dying.” The increased circulation and DO that surrounds the crates has resulted in a much higher quality product.

Bricknell noted that it isn’t difficult to provide DO to lobster. “A simple aquarium aerator even works,” he said. “We can get so big,” Cowan admitted. “The systems don’t have to be fancy or expensive,” he said. In fact, Nighman said pump system didn’t cost more than a few thousand dollars. “And we were able to set it all up ourselves, which saved us money.”

Oxygen continued from page 6
prices offered to lobster fishermen in the Maritime Provinces. Patrice McCarron provided a perspective on lobster market issues in the Maine lobster fishery. The panel has been asked to provide recommendations on five issues:

To determine why there was a sudden drop in price this spring and whether this was reflective of market conditions.

To examine the various cost and revenue components of harvesters, buyers and processors in the Maritimes with a view to determining viability thresholds and, to the extent possible, the ability of any single sector of the industry to influence unduly the price paid at the wharf.

To provide strategic advice to the three provinces on marketing initiatives.

To recommend options for a formal system or systems where the industry would know the price that will be paid harvesters in advance of landings.

To provide advice on a reasonable course of action to stabilize, and then increase, the price paid to harvesters while respecting the principles of owner-operator and fleet separation and protecting a fair return to the other businesses involved in the lobster value chain.

MLA TESTIFIES BEFORE LEGISLATIVE ADVISORY PANEL

Director Patrice McCarron, testified before the Maine Health Exchange Advisory Committee in Augusta in late September. The Committee was established by a legislative order to advise the Legislature on issues related to Maine’s Health Insurance Marketplace. McCarron updated the Committee on the MLAs role as a Navigator to help Maine lobstermen understand the changes resulting from the implementation of the Affordable Care Act.

BAIT UPDATE

The Area 1A herring fishery was closed, effective September 9 through September 30, 2013, due to Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMC) projections that the quota for Trimes ter 2 (June 1 through Sept. 30) of 20,378 metric tons had been harvested.

ASMC 2013 herring spawning area closures

Eastern Maine: Aug. 27 - Sept. 23
Western Maine: Sept. 1 - Sept. 28
New Hampshire/Maine (including southern Maine): Sept. 19 - Oct. 1

During the Area 1A closure, any vessels may land or offload Herring in Maine as incidental catch as long as such herring do not comprise more than 10% of the total weight of the catch, not to exceed 2000 pounds per trip per day. Herring taken legally outside Area 1A may be transported through the area, only if all fishing gear has been stowed. Fishermen fishing with fixed gear (stop sets, pound nets and weirs only) east of the most western border of Cutler are not subject to this notice.

The balance of the quota (10,822 metric tons) will be available beginning October 1, when the Area 1A herring fishery reopens to all herring vessels.

New Jersey announced the closing of its commercial menhaden purse seine fishery on July 26 because its allocated quota had been harvested. This is a major source of fresh hait for Maine lobstermen. The fishery reopened for a week in August and was closed for the rest of the 2013 season on September 13, with reported landings at 99% of the 39,634,973 pounds quota.

NOTICES

DMR REPLACING BROKEN OR LOST TRAP TAGS

The Maine Department of Marine Resources and the Maine Marine Patrol are asking lobstermen with broken or lost tags, who ordered them before May 1, 2013, to contact the nearest Marine Patrol office to arrange for free replacements. Marine Patrol officials will also be supplied with replacement tags to provide them in the field to lobstermen with broken or lost tags if they ordered tags before May 1, 2013. For tags that were ordered before May 1, 2013, if more than ten percent of them are damaged all tags will be replaced free of charge.

The Maine Marine Patrol is asking that broken tags, if they can be retrieved, be brought into the nearest Marine Patrol office or to a local Marine Patrol official and exchanged for new tags. Unbroken tags should remain on the traps. To ar ranged for replacement of broken tags, contact the Marine Patrol office in Lamoine at 667-3373 or in Boothbay at 633-9595.

DMR TRAWL SURVEY

The fall inshore trawl survey began in New Hampshire waters on September 23, and is working its way east to finish up about October 25 off Grand Manan and is working its way west to finish up in New Jersey waters on September 25. The survey is designed to provide information on the 39,634,973 pounds quota.

NORTH rugged rational management decisions. The better information we have about all our fisheries resources, the better we can ensure a future for both fishermen and the resource.

The best source of information is directly from the boat crew. You may haul them on either channel 16 or 13, and then switch to your preferred local working channel. The crew cell phone is 207-557-5276.

ASMC LOBSTER DRAFT ADDENDUM XXII RELEASED FOR PUBLIC COMMENT

The ASMC has released Draft Addendum XXII to Amendment 3 to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan for American Lobster for public comment. The Draft Addendum presents additional options for management of the southern New England lobster stock. These options address the issue of single and aggregate ownership caps in Lobster Conservation Management Area 3 (offshore waters). Public comment will be accepted until 5 p.m. on October 17, and should be forwarded to Kate Taylor, Senior FMP Coordinator, at 1050 N. Highland St., Suite 200 A-N, Arlington, VA 22201 or ktaylor@asmfc.org (Subject line: Lobster Draft Addendum XXII).

ATLANTIC MENHADEN BENCHMARK STOCK ASSESSMENT COMING

The ASMC is continuing work on the 2014 benchmark stock assessment for Atlantic menhaden. The assessment will be used to evaluate the health of the Atlantic menhaden stock and inform management of this species. The Commission’s stock assessment process and meetings are open to the public, with the exception of discussions of confidential data, when the public will be asked to leave the room.

The Data Workshop will be conducted on January 13-14, 2014. This workshop will review all available data sources for Atlantic menhaden and identify data sets that will be incorporated in the stock assessment.

SOME NEW C.G. SAFETY REQUIREMENTS IN PLACE

By Kevin Ploorman

The Coast Guard Authorization Act of 2010 was signed into law on October 14, 2010 and was modified slightly by the Coast Guard Authorization Act of 2012. The Act requires the Coast Guard to develop and implement new safety regulations for commercial fishing industry vessels. What does this mean to you? If you fish inside the three nautical mile line you should be concerned. If you fish beyond the three nautical mile line there are some significant changes coming your way.

The commercial fishing vessel safety regulations will be the same whether your vessel is state registered or federally documented and the “line” where additional safety requirements become applicable will no longer be the Boundary Line. The Boundary Line will be replaced by the three nautical mile line. This line is clearly displayed on most nautical charts.

So what are the new requirements for commercial fishing vessels?

The carriage requirements for prima ry lifesaving equipment are changing, but first the Coast Guard must submit a report to Congress on the carriage of survival craft. The new requirements will require primary lifesaving equipment, either an inflatable buoyant apparatus or a life raft, to be carried on board vessels operating beyond the three nautical mile line. It is not known at this time if any exceptions to this rule will be
Rene Cloutier, a 20-year veteran of the Maine Bureau of Marine Patrol, has been promoted to Lieutenant of Division I, which includes the Maine coast from Kittery to the St. George River.

As Lieutenant, Cloutier will be responsible for planning, directing, supervising and evaluating all Marine Patrol activities within the Division. Lieutenant Cloutier replaces Major Jon Cornish, who served as Division I Lieutenant for the previous nine years before his recent promotion.

Prior to his promotion, Lieutenant Cloutier served seven years as a Marine Patrol Sergeant based in West Boothbay Harbor. During his years as Sergeant, Cloutier supervised the work of five Marine Patrol Officers and one Boat Specialist. He was also responsible for the investigation and successful prosecution of numerous violations of lobster fishery laws.

Lieutenant Cloutier began his career in the Maine Marine Patrol in 1994, serving for seven years as a Marine Patrol Officer in Friendship.

2013-2014 SHRIMP SEASON LOOKS GRIM

An indicator of the Gulf of Maine shrimp population has fallen to its lowest level on record, raising questions about whether the fishery should be shut down this coming winter. This summer’s shrimp index was at its lowest point since the annual trawl survey began in 1984, said Maggie Hunter, a scientist with the Maine Department of Marine Resources who sits on a three-state technical committee that analyzes the data and recommends what the rules should be for the upcoming season.

Scientists last year recommended shutting down the fishery, but regulators ended up setting a short season with a 74 percent cut in quota.

In the end, the season was a bust because there were so few shrimp to catch. About 90 percent of the annual harvest is typically caught by Maine boats, with New Hampshire and Massachusetts accounting for the rest.

The shrimp population doesn’t look like it’ll be bouncing back anytime in the next few years, Hunter said. Not only is there a dearth of shrimp, there are very few young shrimp that would normally be caught in three or four years as they reach market size.

Hunter said. This is the third consecutive year there’s been a shortage of young shrimp.

The ASMFC’s Northern shrimp section meets on October 2 in Portsmouth, N.H. to discuss next steps for management of Northern shrimp.

USED ROPE GOES TO A GOOD CAUSE

During the last week of August, nineteen lobstermen from Vinalhaven to Trescott brought in more than 36,000 pounds of used groundline for an artistic cause. Orly Genger, the artist who created a massive rope sculpture for a New York City park in May 2013, will commence her next piece this fall, destined for Texas. Lobstermen were paid fifty cents per pound ($0.50/lb).

Participating lobstermen noted that this program does help them purchase replacement rope and is by far a better disposal method for their old rope than bringing it to a landfill.

Most of the 18 tons of rope collected during August was in service for less than three years. The average weight of rope brought in during this collection was 1,875 pounds per lobsterman, with the highest being 3,750 pounds from a lobsterman in Stonington-Deer Isle.

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LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT LEADERS SAY THEY WILL REVIEW A COMPLAINT FILED BY AN ANIMAL RIGHTS GROUP WHICH WANTS CRIMINAL CHARGES TO BE FILED AGAINST LINDA BEAN’S MAINE LOBSTER COMPANY OVER ITS PROCESSING OF THE SEAFOOD.

Local law enforcement leaders say they will review a complaint filed by an animal rights group which wants criminal charges to be filed against Linda Bean’s Maine Lobster company over its processing of the seafood. District Attorney Geoffrey Rushlau and Rockland police Chief Bruce Boucher both said they had received the complaint filed by the People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA).

He pointed out that the animal cruelty statute in Maine covers all “sentient” animals. Attorney Stephen Hayes, who represents Linda Bean, said the claims by PETA were groundless. He said he does not consider a lobster to be a sentient animal. Bean’s processing plant in Rockland meets or exceeds all industry and government regulations and standards, Hayes said. He said the process used at the Rockland plant is nearly identical to those in all Maine and Canadian plants.

PETA VIDEO RAISES TEMPERERS
allowed. With the limited number of authorized life raft servicing facilities here in Maine and New Hampshire the scheduling and servicing of your life raft/inflatable buoyant apparatus will need to be closely coordinated with the servicing facilities.

All commercial fishing vessels operating beyond the three nautical mile line will be required to: carry a marine radio; carry sufficient medical supplies for the size of the vessel and the area of operation; carry adequate ground tackle (anchor).

The operator of a commercial fishing vessel operating beyond the three nautical mile line will be required to maintain a record of emergency equipment maintenance and a log book of the required drills and safety instructions. He will also have to complete a training program and possess a valid certificate issued under the program. The training program will include seamanship, stability, collision prevention, navigation, fire fighting and prevention, damage control, personal survival, emergency medical care, emergency drills, and weather. An individual will be required to complete a refresher course every five years.

Commercial fishing vessels less than 50 feet in length, built after January 1, 2010, and operating beyond the three nautical mile line must be constructed in a manner that provides a level of safety equivalent to the standards for recreational vessels. There are ongoing discussions within the Coast Guard as to what this means and we are awaiting further guidance. Beginning October 15, 2015, all commercial fishing vessels operating beyond the three nautical mile line will be required to complete a dockside examination and possess a valid Certificate of Compliance.

Commercial fishing vessels 50 feet or more in length built after July 1, 2013, operating beyond the three nautical mile line will be required to meet classification society rules and will be required to maintain classification with a recognized classification society. Commercial fishing vessels 79 feet or more in length built after July 1, 2013, will be required to meet Load Line requirements.

When do these new requirements come into effect? Some requirements set forth in the Coast Guard Authorization Act have established dates when they are required to be met, such as, primary lifesaving equipment carriage, Load Line, and construction standards requirements. Other provisions of the Authorization Act will not take effect until the regulations are developed to implement the requirements. The Coast Guard is working to complete this rulemaking. The Final Rule will state when the specific requirements will take effect.

Commercial fishing vessels 79 feet or more in length built after July 1, 2013, will be required to meet Load Line requirements. When do these new requirements come into effect? Some requirements set forth in the Coast Guard Authorization Act have established dates when they are required to be met, such as, primary lifesaving equipment carriage, Load Line, and construction standards requirements. Other provisions of the Authorization Act will not take effect until the regulations are developed to implement the requirements. The Coast Guard is working to complete this rulemaking. The Final Rule will state when the specific requirements will take effect.
Several wharfs have identified higher levels of damaged lobsters from boats with large tanks below deck - as the boat lurches from idle to steaming, lobsters slosh around in open space below deck. Vessels with below deck tanks can reduce impact to lobsters by placing them in crates.

Many of Maine’s lobster buying stations are in shallow harbors with low currents. Their dissolved oxygen levels can fall to levels that are very poor for lobster quality, particularly at low tide and/or after heavy rainfall. Installing aerators vastly improves shore-side holding at the wharf.

LEFT PHOTO 1) Water enters the aerator 2) Air is suctioned through the T-bar; air levels are adjustable with the red valve 3) Aerated water enters the tank.

RIGHT PHOTO Dissolved oxygen reading on the aerated tank. 10 milligram oxygen to 1 liter of water is ideal for lobsters.

After removing lobsters from the trap, place them on a soft surface like bait or seaweed. Band lobsters as soon as possible after emptying traps.

Remove stray lobster parts, bait and any other decomposing material from IPL crates. Repair or remove severely damaged crates from circulation – claws and tails can fit through big holes and lead to increased injury to the lobsters.

Working comfortably is good for you and your lobsters. If you don’t have a crank-up tank, lean it on a stack of crates to facilitate careful unloading. One lobster, one hand.

The MLCA has been on Maine’s lobster wharves this summer documenting the many ways lobstermen are working to keep their lobsters healthy and valuable. Photos by Annie Tselikis.