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## Landings, vol. 25, no. 12

Maine Lobstermen's Community Alliance

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# LANDINGS

News & Views from Maine's Lobstering Community

December 2017 | Vol. 25, No. 12

## WHAT HAPPENS WHEN CHANGE COMES TO THE OCEAN?

By Melissa Waterman

Anyone who has enjoyed body surfing in the ocean understands the notion of a tipping point. There you are, paddling your body through the water as fast as you can on the swell of a small wave. Bit by bit the wave increases in size, lifting you up from the surface of the ocean. At a certain point, you and the wave



From left to right, Doug Grout (NH), Megan Ware (ASMFC), Kathleen Reardon (Maine DMR), Burton Shank (NEFMC), Patrice McCarron (MLA).

tumble forward and sweep against the shore. It is that moment, on the crest of the wave when there is no going back, that is the tipping point.

There are tipping points in ecology as well, when a natural system moves from one state to another, often abruptly. How to recognize and manage tipping points in the ocean was the subject of a three-day workshop held in Santa Barbara, California, in early November. The Maine lobster fishery was featured as one of the case studies explored by workshop participants. The Maine Lobstermen's Association (MLA) executive director Patrice McCarron, with colleagues from

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## ART AND HUMOR ON VINALHAVEN

By Melissa Waterman

It's not often that schoolchildren get to spend time with a man who makes his living creating wacky paintings of fish and other marine creatures. The students at the Vinalhaven School had just that chance in late October when Alaskan artist Ray Troll visited the school to work with students and later gave an evening presentation on his career to a large crowd. The visit was organized by Vinalhaven resident Mike Mesko, a longtime fan of the artist.

"Jim Clayter first exposed us all to Ray's humor by carrying his T-shirts at his Vinalhaven Pottery Studio years back and the rest is history," Mesko said. "Then Steve Rosen and I had the harebrained idea a couple years back to get Ray to come visit Vinalhaven." Mesko had fished in Alaska back in the 1980s. He first purse seined roe herring in 1979 in Bristol Bay, and continued for the next fifteen years fishing in that area for herring, sockeye, black cod, and halibut. That was where he discovered Troll's irreverent and beautiful work.

"Mike was aware of my work," Troll said via email. "He had the notion to bring me out to lobster country a

Continued on page 11



Vinalhaven schoolchildren watch Ray Troll at work. M. Mesko photo.

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## MARINE PATROL SAYS FAREWELL TO TWO OFFICERS

By Jeff Nichols, Department of Marine Resources

Two Marine Patrol Officers with a combined 57 years of experience have recently left the Marine Patrol Bureau, but each takes with him fond memories of working with and getting to know Maine fishing communities.

Marine Patrol Specialist Mike Neelon and Marine Patrol Officer Brian Tolman have each moved on after long and successful careers working with Maine fishermen. Both brought significant prior experience on the water to their jobs when they came on board.

Neelon, who began his career as a Marine Patrol Specialist in 1992, already had a 1,500-ton captain's license, having served aboard merchant marine vessels shipping out of Texas and Louisiana to ports as distant as Brazil. Neelon's background included a connection to the fishing industry as well. His family built trawlers in Newburyport, Massachusetts, and he worked on groundfish boats during college years. "So, when I saw an ad in the *Portland Press Herald* for a boat captain in the Marine Patrol, which includes running and maintaining patrol vessels, I said, 'I've done this,'" said Neelon.

Over the years Neelon has witnessed changes in Maine's fishing industry and has seen Marine Patrol adapt to those changes. "I've captained boats from the *Winds*, a 35-footer, to the *Challenge II*, a 46-footer, which has allowed us to haul lobster gear as fishing effort has moved further off-shore," said Neelon.

One aspect of the job that his training in boat operation didn't prepare him for was recovering bodies. "I've recovered 22 bodies over

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## COASTAL OUTLOOK *Thoughts from MLCA President Patrice McCarron*

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*MLCA Alliance is a 501 (c) (3) non-profit organization, established in 2010, which achieves its charitable mission through programs in education, research and charity.*

Welcome to the end of 2017! While the final numbers are not in yet, this year will certainly mark a downturn from the recent trend of seemingly endless increases in lobster landings and price. Lobstermen have been frustrated to see prices weak compared to 2016 values given the slow pace of landings. While the factors affecting price are poorly understood, the Canada-European Union Free Trade Agreement, which went into effect in September, has made Maine lobster more expensive than Canadian lobster in European countries, contributing to dampening of the price paid to Maine lobstermen.

But, as an editorial by John Sackton, publisher of *SeafoodNews.com*, reprinted in this issue of *Landings* points out, now is not the time to slack off on efforts to market Maine lobster in this country and abroad. The efforts of the Maine Lobster Marketing Collaborative, established in 2013, are strengthening recognition of Maine lobster as a distinctive food item and, as Sackton notes, cutting off funding for these efforts would be shortsighted. *Landings* also chronicles the history of the Collaborative since its inception and its specific focus on celebrity chefs and food media outlets to build demand for Maine new-shell lobster. Matt Jacobson, executive director of the Maine Lobster Marketing Collaborative, weighs in with his take on the Collaborative's successes since it was established less than five years ago.

We also hear from Department of Marine Resources (DMR) Commissioner Patrick Keliher on activities taking place within his department in 2017. A new law strengthening the punishments for serious violations of lobster fishing laws, such as fishing more traps than allowed or scraping eggs from a female lobster, went into effect in June. Keliher believes that law has been effective in making the consequences of illegal fishing greater than the economic benefits.

On a lighter note, *Landings* also features a visit by Alaskan artist Ray Troll to Vinalhaven. Troll, whose quirky images of fish and fishermen have a cult following, was invited by residents Mike Mesko and Steve Rosen to give a talk on the island. Troll also spent time with children at the Vinalhaven School, showing them the delight still felt by a man who has spent his life "drawing fish and dinosaurs" for a living.

South Bristol jeweler Tenley Seiders spends her time, when she's not caring for her two young children or helping her lobsterman husband on his boat, also making things of beauty. Seiders converts lobster shells, as well as mussel and oyster shells, into translucent pieces of fine jewelry in the form of pendants, earrings, and pins. By combining materials used in fishing, such as the FilterRay preservative used on lobster buoys, Seiders makes truly one-of-a-kind pieces that link the wearer to the lobstering world.

*Landings* continues its People of the Coast series with a profile of the women who run Jess's Fish Market in Rockland. The small market was founded in 1986 by Sharon O'Brien and her former husband Jess Wiggin as a small breakfast and lunch shop. They quickly realized that what locals were looking for was fresh, locally-sourced seafood. But over time, that demand changed as more "people from away" moved to the area and Rockland's dining options expanded in scope and quality. Now the market, run by O'Brien and her three daughters, provides retail and wholesale fish and seafood products from around the world to its customers while also managing to ship fresh lobsters throughout the country.

Meanwhile, on the West Coast of the country, Maine Lobstermen's Association director Patrice McCarron and state and federal colleagues took part in a conference on a topic of increasing importance in the Gulf of Maine — ecological tipping points.

Tipping points are moments at which an ecological system, such the Gulf, moves irrevocably into a new state. The transformation occurs due to human activities as well as environmental changes, such as increasing temperatures in the world's oceans. Researchers are concerned that the Gulf of Maine might reach such a tipping point, making the lobster population and the communities that rely on it increasingly vulnerable.

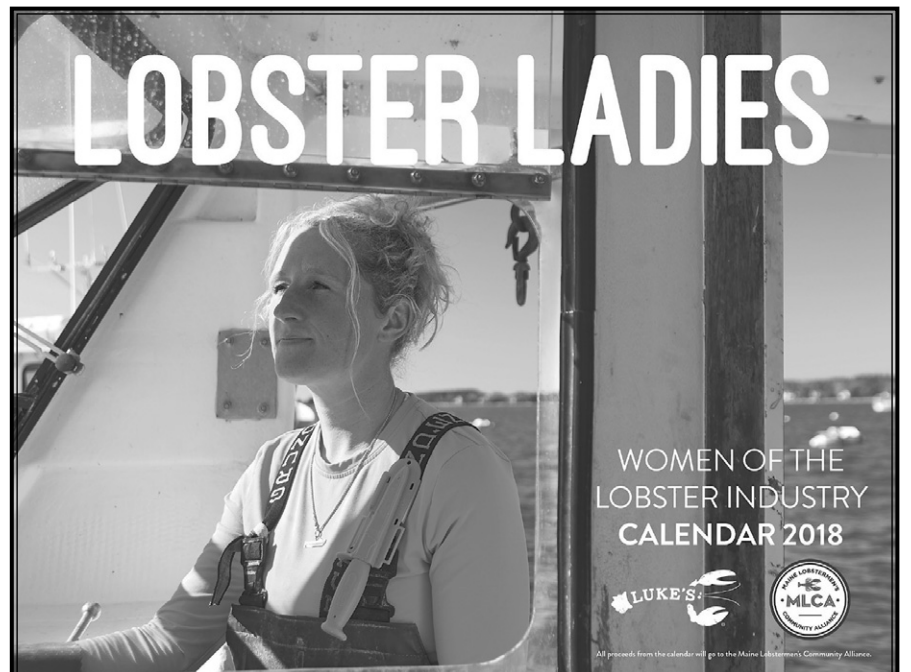
Cody Stewart of Yarmouth is the subject of this month's Maine Fishermen's Forum scholarship recipient profile. Stewart graduated from high school in 2014 and instead of continuing to lobster, he took time to pursue a marine mechanics degree at a school in Orlando, Florida with Forum scholarship assistance. He returned from the one-year program to lobster in Casco Bay but, as he notes in the article, "It gave me the confidence to know I can finish what I start even if I am having a hard time."

Finally, we reprint a 1933 letter from the Commissioner of Sea and Shore Fisheries (the precursor of today's DMR) to Maine lobstermen suffering from the effects of the Great Depression. Horatio Crie, of Castine, was a staunch supporter of Maine's fishermen during his 17-year tenure as head of the agency. In his letter addressed to "Brother Fishermen," Crie said, "Previous to the slump in the price of lobsters we had built up a fleet of expensive boats with high powered engines that cost dollars to operate. Now we find ourselves confronted with a condition hard to overcome because the lobster business will pay little more than operating expenses ... There is one phase of the situation that we must all take into consideration and that is to preserve our fisheries. If we destroy our lobsters by lawless methods of selling undersized lobsters...we are killing the goose that laid the golden egg..."

Who said that history often repeats itself?

We hope you enjoy this issue of *Landings* and welcome your thoughts on future stories.

Patrice



### WHO ARE THE WOMEN OF MAINE'S LOBSTER INDUSTRY? FIND OUT IN THIS NEW 12-MONTH CALENDAR BY LUKE'S LOBSTER.

The 2018 calendar features photos and stories of the women behind Maine's thriving lobster fishery — the fishermen, scientists and business owners who make the industry strong.

Calendars are **\$19.99** (includes shipping and handling) and are available from Luke's Lobster at [www.lukeslobster.com](http://www.lukeslobster.com).

**All proceeds from the sale of the calendar benefit the Maine Lobstermen's Community Alliance ([www.mlcalliance.org](http://www.mlcalliance.org)).**



## GUEST COLUMN: *2017 was a year of change*

By Patrick Keliher, Commissioner, Maine Department of Marine Resources

While landings in most parts of the state are down compared to last year's record-setting catch, lobster continues to be Maine's most valuable fishery. In fact, in 2016 it was the most valuable fishery in the U.S. Maine's lobster fishery remains a success story due to the close collaboration the Department of Marine Resources (DMR) and the industry have and must maintain as we move forward in the face of a changing environment within the Gulf of Maine.

Before I go on, it is important to note that just because landings will be down in 2017 it does not mean the sky is falling. That said, we can't ignore the decline in the Lobster Settlement Survey or landings. In my role as a Commissioner at the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC) I have watched as both the industry and state managers struggled to come to agreement on what to do as the Southern New England lobster stocks declined and in some areas collapsed. It is because of the Southern New England lobster situation that I moved forward the development of an addendum to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan for lobster to see if we could ensure greater resiliency in our lobster stocks.

The goal of the proposed management measures that are currently being developed by ASMFC is to increase the resiliency of the Gulf of Maine/Georges Bank (GOM/GBK) lobster stock. Specifically, the Draft Addendum will look at standardizing the different management measures across Lobster Conservation Management Areas (LCMAs).

While the GOM/GBK stocks have been combined into one stock, management measures, such as gauge size and v-notch definitions, are inconsistent from one LCMA to another. Under the current framework, lobsters protected in one area can be harvested in another. The Draft Addendum has the potential to establish better protections for the resource by establishing a uniform set of regulations across LCMAs.

As I stated above, we know that change is happening in the Gulf of Maine and lobster populations are responding to those changes. We also know that it is critically important that we be proactive and pursue development of management measures that will ensure the fishery will be more resilient in the face of these changes.

So, what changes will be proposed? The quick answer is: I don't know yet. The Plan Development Team has been tasked with developing alternatives for consideration in the Draft Addendum. DMR will work with the lobster industry through this process to advocate for Maine fishermen and the long-term sus-

tainability of Maine's lobster fishery.

Also under way are meetings with industry as we prepare to discuss the re-authorization of the Maine Lobster Marketing Collaborative (MLMC) with the Maine Legislature this winter. The MLMC staff and several board members have been meeting with the lobster zone councils to share the results of their efforts over the past four years as well as a third-party audit of the Collaborative's work.

The MLMC director Matt Jacobson will give a presentation to the Lobster Advisory Council, scheduled for December 14 and to the Marine Resources Committee. After the presentation, the Committee may report out a bill to renew or modify the license surcharges that fund the Collaborative's work. What it will look like is anybody's best guess. My personal feeling is we must not give up on marketing this iconic Maine product and brand. Doing nothing would be a poor decision.

I also want to touch on the enforcement bill that was passed in the 1st session of the 128th legislature. The bill that was passed resulted in major improvements in Maine's ability to enforce the laws within our lobster fishery. This law has improved the ability of Maine Marine Patrol to make cases against those individuals who are violating the laws that exist for the benefit of all license holders. It also has also put teeth into the penalties for violations that are among the most damaging to the lobster resource and to other fishermen. I see these penalties as a great deterrent and I believe they are already creating improvements with compliance.

It is important to note that the majority of harvesters demonstrate a commitment to the laws and regulations that sustain this fishery. However, as this fishery has grown to a half-billion-dollar industry, the temptations to cheat have also grown. A major outcome of this law change was the creation of mandatory minimum and maximum lobster license suspension lengths for the most egregious violations in the lobster fishery. They include trap molesting, fishing over

*Continued on page 4*



*Patrick Keliher is DMR Commissioner and serves on the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission.*

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## GUEST COLUMN: *Marketing important in bad times and in good*

By Matt Jacobson, *Maine Lobster Marketing Collaborative*

During 2012, the Maine lobster industry suffered its worst season ever. The catch started coming in in May. Processors were busy with the Canadian catch, and the live market was not developed enough to handle the six million pounds that Maine fishermen brought in between May and July. Predictably, the price plummeted.

From the ashes of 2012, the industry decided to embark on an enhanced marketing effort. Two words are critical in that sentence: enhanced and marketing. First, “enhanced.” The Maine lobster industry began marketing through the state’s Lobster Promotion Council in 1991 – that’s right, the industry has been active in marketing for more than a quarter century. Marketing is not a new concept in our industry.

Second, let’s discuss “marketing.” What is marketing, and what should we expect from a marketing effort? Marketing is a process of identifying customers’ needs and creating messages satisfying those needs so that customers are motivated to buy a product.

Marketing is not a silver bullet. It cannot correct everything that is challenging in this industry. We cannot negotiate multi-national complex trade agreements like the one between Canada and the European Union which made live Maine lobster in Europe 8% more expensive overnight and will make processed meat 20% more expensive over the next five years. We cannot change the weather or keep hurricanes from wrecking the fourth-largest city in the U.S. as well as disrupting one of our largest markets — Florida — when our catch comes on the strongest. Marketing cannot control the price of bait or fuel.

A robust marketing effort can increase and maintain demand so that the bad times aren’t so bad and the good times are even better. And over the last two years, the Maine Lobster Marketing Collaborative (MLMC) has done just that.

In 2012, a 6-million-pound shift in timing made the price at the dock drop to \$2/pound and lower. This year, we had nearly 30 million pounds of lobster displaced or threatened (Europe, Florida, Houston, South Korea) and yet, while prices are not at 2016 levels, they are way above 2012 levels.

As you read this column, the MLMC will have completed presenting its accomplishments to each Lobster Zone Council and will speak next to the Lobster Advisory Council on December 14. When lobstermen hear what we’ve done, how we decided to take the road we did, and how we measure our efforts, they have given us much support during the council meetings

At the presentations we tell the story of how the Collaborative was formed. We spend some time identifying the board of directors which by law had to include four fishermen, three dealers, two Commissioners, and two at-large members. The board and staff, with our agency partner Weber Shandwick, developed a marketing strategy that we think delivers the most value for the money we spend. It is important to remember that there are nearly unlimited options for

*Keliher continued from page 3*

the trap limit, fishing sunken trawls, scrubbing eggs, and arson or sinking another fisherman’s boat. None of these violations are things that someone might do “accidentally” so supporters of this bill felt strongly that the penalty needed to match the violation. For some, a fine or a one-year suspension is viewed as the price of doing business, and worth the possible reward. But the potential long-term loss of a license carries enough weight to be a serious deterrent.

I do want to thank the Maine Lobstermen’s Association for conducting an industry-wide survey of all license holders, not just its members. The results of this survey were a valuable tool for both the Department and the Legislature’s Marine Resources Committee. At the end of several days of deliberation last spring there was overwhelming support for removing violators from the water for a substantial length of time.

marketing. Our guiding principle is to generate the best marketing/public relations return for the effort.

Measuring our effort is a subject on which the board, staff, and Weber Shandwick have spent significant time, discussion, and research.

Measuring Maine lobster sales is astonishingly complex. There are about 315 licensed lobster dealer/processors in Maine. Each pursues a unique sales strategy; none are sharing their data with MLMC. Within this complex dealer/processor network are literally thousands of third party distributors, from Sysco and PFG to local fish purveyors in every city in the world. Finally, there are millions of restaurants, supermarkets, food trucks and other places where consumers purchase Maine lobster to eat. Clean sales data do not exist. It never has. It is simply not possible for the MLMC to measure sales in the industry. More importantly, the industry and Legislature recognized this when they wrote the statute mandating a marketing effort.

On the other hand, it was never an option to not measure what the MLMC did. Neither the board nor the staff nor Weber Shandwick advocated for that. Our goal was to identify a measurement protocol that would give an accurate picture of our efforts and provide some indication of our effect on our target audience.

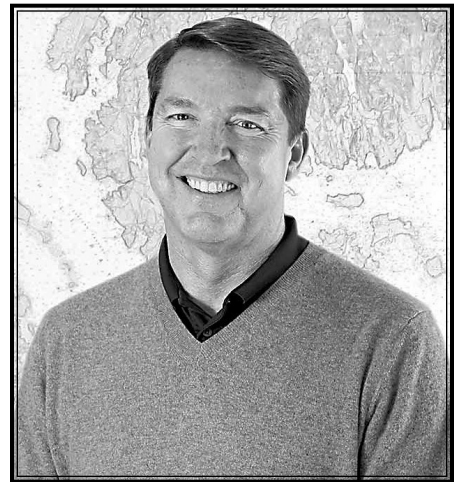
So we measure everything we do. While we’ve accomplished much, here are the highlights: In the last two years we personally have reached more than 3,000 chefs and given them hard- vs. new-shell taste tests and educated them about Maine lobster. The chefs we’ve worked with are influencers in the culinary world and are now telling our story to their millions of followers. On social media, we have reached more than 25 million people, informing them about Maine lobster and generating interest in our product. That is 130 times the number of people who read *USA Today*. We have generated more than 3.2 billion media impressions worth an advertising value of \$22 million. For context, the Collaborative would have to buy 27.4 Super Bowl ads to reach a similar number of people.

The MLMC will have to be reauthorized in 2018 for the efforts to continue. It is up to the industry to decide if the results provide a value for the cost. During this evaluation, it is easy to focus on all the aspects of the lobster business that might irritate any one of us. But the real question is whether the industry will be better off if we decide not to market our product.

Thanks to the strong support shown by the industry, these law changes have provided the tools to deter crime, improve Marine Patrol’s ability to enforce laws and provide a more level playing field for all Maine lobstermen.

What I find amazing is some bad actors are still not stopping these egregious violations. Complaints still come in and the Marine Patrol recently wrote up William Haass of Lamoine for fishing over the trap limit. While this case has yet to go through the process, Mr. Haass received a preliminary suspension of five years, will return to the fishery with 500 traps and be required to have a vessel monitoring system on his boat for a time equal to the length of suspension.

Finally, I’d like to say happy holidays and best wishes for a safe, healthy and prosperous new year.



*Matt Jacobson is the executive director of the Maine Lobster Marketing Collaborative.*

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# MAINE FISHERMEN'S FORUM SCHOLARSHIP GIVES NORTH YARMOUTH LOBSTERMAN NEW OPPORTUNITY

The Maine Fishermen's Forum has awarded a total of \$385,886 in scholarships since 1998 to students related to a person who is actively involved in the seafood industry. The awards given each year are based on the amount of money donated and raised through the annual Fishermen's Forum Scholarship Auction. Landings introduces you to some of the award recipients throughout the year.

By Shelley Wigglesworth

Maine Fishermen's Forum Scholarship recipient Cody Stewart of North Yarmouth is the son of lobsterman Craig Stewart and Rhonda Stewart. He graduated from Greely High School in 2014 before pursuing an education in marine mechanics for outboard and inboard engines at the Marine Mechanics Institute in Orlando, Florida. He graduated from the Institute in 2015.

Stewart comes from a fishing family from Long Island, and grew up on the water fishing and working on not just his father's boats, the *JC* and *Carl and Company* but also his uncle's boat, the *Leanne*, and his grandfather's boat, *Donna Elaine*. "I started to haul my own traps when I was 9, while I was fishing with my family members. Later I got a 30' Young Brothers named *Yank and Bank* and now I have my father's old boat, *JC*, which I run along with a sternman."

Stewart went a long way from home to find the education that matched his interests. The Marine Mechanics Institute's core program focuses on training from Mercury Marine, Suzuki Marine, Yamaha Marine, Honda Marine, and Volvo Penta. Each course during the year-long program is designed to provide students with technical and hands-on training specific to the specific brand.

"There were none close by for the specific program I wanted," Stewart explained. "I was looking for marine mechanics for outboard and inboard engines and wanted to learn more about marine

diesels. All the other schools for diesels around were meant more for trucks and transmissions, not marine uses."

Stewart said it was his father who encouraged him to further his education after high school, something the 21-year-old said he is thankful for. "I'm glad he did push me because it's helped me already be able to figure out more issues by myself and have a back-up plan and a degree for if I'd ever need it." Not to mention the skills he learned have come in handy as he makes his livelihood on a boat. Stewart also participated in the Maine Lobstermen's Association's Lobster Leadership Institute this year.

When reflecting on his time in college, he said "I enjoyed the fact that I got to experience a different place and to try living somewhere else away from Maine. I made lots of friendships and connections with people by going off to school. The most challenging part about it was probably experiencing something completely different from home, which I hadn't done for very long before. I had doubts, but I look back on it now and I think it was a good experience. It gave me the confidence to know I can finish what I start even if I am having a hard time."

Stewart recognizes the value of the aid he received, from both the Maine Fishermen's Forum Scholarship Fund and other sources. "Funding for school was made possible from student loans and scholarships, like the Fishermen's Forum's," he noted. "The scholarship money was a great help to lower my student loans, which gave me a little bit more of a boost when I started working as an adult."



Having a marine mechanics degree in his pocket gives lobsterman Cody Stewart something to fall back on. C. Stewart photo.



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## 2018 SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION

The Maine Fishermen's Forum Board of Directors offers a scholarship fund to benefit immediate family members (son/daughter, or a grandson/granddaughter) or legal dependent of someone actively involved in Maine's seafood industry, regardless of financial need or academic achievement. **Undergraduates attending a two or four year college who are in at least the second year of their program or students who are in at least the second semester of their Certificate Program** will be eligible. Applications will be accepted through March 2, 2018. Scholarships will be awarded by a random drawing to be held during the 43rd annual Maine Fishermen's Forum.

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- Provide an official transcript or Registrar's letter of current standing along with the application.

**Please note that previous winners are not eligible.**

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City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

### SCHOOL INFORMATION

College/University Name \_\_\_\_\_ Expected Year of Graduation: \_\_\_\_\_

Location of College \_\_\_\_\_ Your Major \_\_\_\_\_

\*\*School Standing as of Sept 2017 (circle one) Freshman Sophomore Junior Senior

### MAINE SEAFOOD INDUSTRY FAMILY MEMBER INFORMATION

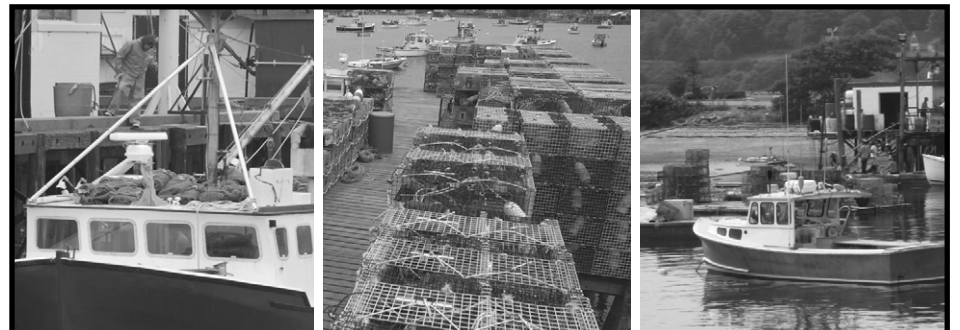
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City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Vessel Name or Commercial License Number \_\_\_\_\_

Describe participation in the Maine seafood industry \_\_\_\_\_



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## GUEST COLUMN: *Maine lobster suffering blows so now's the time to fight*

By John Sackton

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Yesterday we learned that there is considerable opposition on the docks in Maine to the reauthorization of the levy funding the Maine Lobster Marketing Collaborative. The levy that funds the marketing program comes from an additional charge on lobster licenses, and has to be renewed by the legislature next year. But in a series of meetings up and down the coast, there has been some vocal opposition to the whole idea of a marketing program. Two of the seven zone councils have voted to support it, and meetings in the other five are being held this month [November].

At a recent meeting, reported on by the *Portland Press Herald*, Greg Griffin, a Cape Elizabeth lobsterman said, "Here's the problem: it did not make me a penny, and it's not gonna. My boat price has not been affected, period. Show me a guy here that is making more money because of what you do? No one. I don't see my money returning me a penny. I am sorry."

Many harvesters feel the same way, and they are dead wrong.

Traditionally it is very hard to get fishermen to look past the dock, when they are in effect paid at the dock. Too often, a harvester looks at the lobster or crab cash price he is being offered, and thinks the guy offering it is deciding what it is. That's because he has seen bidding wars, and sometimes a rival cash buyer will offer 25 cents more. In this view, the price for lobster is set at the local dock, or at most, the dock across the bay. So if his cash buyer doesn't offer more money, the levy obviously failed. Nothing could be more wrong about how lobster prices are set.

Lobster prices are set with supply and demand. The supply is unpredictable, and this year it is likely down. I have never heard a lobsterman say they're getting more or fewer lobsters based on what they pay in for management or regulation. Everyone knows that the environmental factors that influence lobster populations are variable, and that changes in the volume landed is simply one of the risks of lobster fishing. But demand, i.e. the desire of your customers to buy lobster, is not so unpredictable. And it is not so out of control as the natural cycles of lobster populations.

In normal years, when lobsters are in short supply, prices rise as more buyers bid for the available animals. Likewise when lobsters are in good supply, i.e. landings are heavy, prices go down because there are not enough buyers to take up all the lobsters coming ashore. The short recent history of the lobster industry in Maine is one of record landings, and high prices. This has made the fishery the most valuable it has ever been.

Furthermore, the overall market has expanded, especially to China, so that there are more customers wanting to buy lobster. Just look at how many Chinese representatives are showing up on the docks in Maine with cash. This extra demand has helped create these record values, and it is likely to continue.

But this fall, things have changed. Prices at the dock are down about \$1.00 from where they were in June. After years of good prices, all of a sudden we are seeing lobsters under \$3.00, even \$2.50 for shedders. So what is a harvester to think when his price is down a dollar, and he is being asked to support a marketing council? What he should be thinking is "I'm glad that price is not down \$1.25." But that is pretty hard for a human being to do.

The point is that in the seafood industry we live in a world of supply and demand for our products. We often can't influence supply, but we can have some say about demand. And by working on the demand side, we increase the value of the fishery, regardless of the supply. This is what the marketing council is supposed to do.

There are other reasons specific to Maine's lobster industry. Originally when the marketing collaborative was proposed I was against it, because I felt a better marketing campaign could be run on North American lobster, combining products from Maine and Canada. But there were people who wanted to differentiate from Canadian lobster, and so Maine went it alone. Now there is no choice but to continue.

The Canadians have got their own lobster levies in PEI, and one is likely coming in New Brunswick. In Nova Scotia, the levy is stalled. Yet the Canadian government also gives its lobster industry tremendous export support. They not only sponsor trade missions and food shows in China, but they negotiated a tariff-free deal with the EU that is going to give Canadian lobsters a huge advantage. For Maine to reject its lobster marketing council at this point would be like throwing down your weapons at the point you are cornered and need to fight.

Maine lobsters are definitely in danger of becoming the second choice product. How can this happen when Maine has such a good reputation and Maine lobster is an iconic brand?

It can happen because of shortsightedness on the part of harvesters. Maine lobsters are primarily sold to tourists in the summer, and the growth of the brand has largely been due to these tourists going home and wanting to continue to eat lobster like they had in Maine. But the market has grown to be a global one. China is buying 'Boston lobsters,' not Maine lobsters. Canadian lobsters — branded with the maple leaf — will soon dominate Europe. Maine has got to find some markets where it can be the number one product, and quickly. This is where the marketing council kicks in.

Alaska supports its fisheries with an industry-paid marketing budget of about \$17 million this year. This is what keeps Alaska products flowing to Japan, it is what opened up wild Alaska salmon in China, and it is what keeps Alaska pollock differentiated from Russian pollock in Europe.

Norway has the largest global seafood marketing program through the Norwegian Seafood Export Council, with a budget of about \$50 million this year, again paid by the industry through a levy or tax on exports. Norway spends this money in dozens of key export markets, including the U.S. It is no accident that Norwegian salmon has become increasingly visible here. The Maine Marketing Collaborative has a tiny budget by comparison, \$2.2 million. Yet with this small amount of money, the group has to set out some markets where Maine is the brand of choice.

There is opportunity to do this both in the U.S. and China. But to defund the program because harvesters don't see a penny returning is literally to throw the fire extinguisher overboard because it is too heavy, just at the point the fire is getting started.

The U.S. lobster industry is going to have a tough time. Right now, demand is weaker on frozen lobster, live prices are lower, and companies who jumped on the lobster band wagon when wholesale prices were attractive are now jumping off. It sometimes takes a restaurant chain nine months to a year to reconfigure menu options. The current crop of reduced use of lobster is a reaction to the prices a year ago. It won't come back overnight just because prices are lower this month. It has to be earned back program by program, and the marketing collaborative can help in this process.

In short, without fighting to get these markets far from Maine, the U.S. industry will have to sell what they can locally, or to discount what they sell in other markets as the second-class product. Refusing to pay to fight for share in these new markets and distant markets is like buying a \$250,000 truck, but not being able to drive more than 100 miles because on principle you won't pay tolls.

We strongly support the renewal of the Maine Lobster Marketing Collaborative budget because we think there is trouble ahead for the Maine fishery and think it is crazy to disarm in the face of what is coming.

The real question is not 'has this program made me a penny,' but has this program helped me make a better living lobstering both when prices are high and when they are low. There we think the answer is yes, and the program should be continued.

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## MAINE LOBSTERMEN'S ASSOCIATION UPDATE

### Maine Lobstermen's Association

...

Advocating for a sustainable lobster resource and the fishermen and communities that depend on it since 1954.

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Craig Stewart, Long Island, 829-2109  
John Tripp, Spruce Head, 691-9744  
Chris Welch, Kennebunk, 205-2093  
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**BOARD OF DIRECTORS'  
MEETING SCHEDULE**  
All meetings take place  
at Darby's Restaurant,  
Belfast, unless otherwise  
indicated.

December 6, 5 p.m.

## STEAMING AHEAD

The talk of the lobster industry this fall has been about the future of the Maine Lobster Marketing Collaborative (MLMC) — to market or not to market? Lobstermen had lots of questions. What does the Collaborative actually do? Do they promote or sell Maine lobster? How can lobstermen be guaranteed that their investment in the Collaborative is paying off?

The Collaborative's director, Matt Jacobson, finished a tour of the zone councils in November to inform the councils of the Collaborative's history and update them on the Collaborative's activities to date. I have attended all of the zone council meetings in order to better understand how the industry feels about the Collaborative, and the level of industry support for its reauthorization. If the Legislature does not reauthorize the Collaborative, it will sunset in October, 2018.

The Collaborative is an industry-funded effort whose costs are shared among lobstermen, dealers and processors. Everyone has skin in the game. Class I lobstermen pay a surcharge on their license of \$165.25; Class II \$330.50; Class III \$480.75 toward the Collaborative's \$2.25 million budget. Dealers and processors also pay an amount that depends on the permits and endorsements they hold. Wholesale dealers with no supplements pay \$1,200; those with up to two supplements pay \$1,800; three to five supplements equals \$2,400; six or more supplements pay \$3,000. Processors who handle less than 1 million pounds pay \$1,000; those over a million pounds pay \$4,000.

Before the November meetings, the conversation about the Collaborative's future had been dominated by a small but vocal group on Facebook who oppose it. They don't feel that they are getting their money's worth and want a guarantee that their investment will convert into a higher boat price. Others on Facebook counter that the Collaborative is doing an excellent job creating demand for Maine lobster and should be continued.

Feedback from the zone council meetings was fairly consistent along the coast. Each of the seven councils listened to an MLMC presentation, engaged in discussion and ultimately weighed in on the Collaborative's future. Sadly, three of the seven zone councils did not even have a quorum present at the meeting and Department of Marine Resources staff had to poll those present rather than taking a formal vote. In the end, and after considerable discussion both for and against, all of the zone councils supported the continuation of the Collaborative. Zones C, E and F did not have a quorum and polled individual members, all of whom were in favor; Zones A, B and D voted unanimously in support and Zone G voted 7 to 3 in support.

Those from the industry who showed up to speak against the Collaborative had a consistent message. To paraphrase, it went like this: I am not against marketing and think that the Collaborative has done good work. But I landed less lobster this year and my price went down so these programs aren't working. I need to know that my investment in the Collaborative will come back to me in my boat price. I want proof that my investment is paying off.

This led to discussions about what the Collaborative does and does not do, and the tools available to the Collaborative to measure its results. Jacobson made it clear that the Collaborative has implemented its work plan based on the statute that created it. The Collaborative's board worked with Collaborative staff to create the current marketing and public relations strategy.

The Collaborative does *not* sell lobster; rather they conduct marketing campaigns to increase demand for Maine lobster, specifically soft-shell. It is the dealers' job to sell the product. The Collaborative is *not* able to directly measure how much lobster has been sold as a result of its marketing program. That information lives with Maine's lobster dealers, the distributors they sell to, and others who ultimately move the product to consumers at the end of the supply chain. Given the complexity of the supply chain and proprietary nature of much of this information, it is unlikely

that the Collaborative will ever have access to this data.

I am very sympathetic to everyone who seeks a direct link between the Collaborative's marketing efforts and lobster sales and increases in boat price. However, it is clear that this link is not possible right now. It is still important for the Collaborative, the industry and the Legislature to explore how we may be able to obtain some of this data, but that will take time.

I hope that lobstermen will not undervalue the significant contributions that the Collaborative has made to the industry. The public relations component of the Collaborative's work is huge. They have done an excellent job of creating positive press for the Maine lobster industry, telling the stories we want to tell and protecting the Maine brand against bad press. I experience the value of this firsthand because I field a lot of calls from the press. I know that the lobster fishery's image needs to be actively managed in the incredibly fast-paced and always hungry media world; it would take just an instant for our industry to be irreparably damaged by bad press. One bad article can reach an international audience in the blink of an eye. Funding an organization like the Collaborative to deal with the media and maintain our image is essential to our ability to maintain and gain customers and keep interest in Maine lobster strong.

Let's remember that the Collaborative was only created in 2013. Its first few years were dedicated to hiring its director, creating a high-quality Web site, selecting a public relations firm, developing its marketing strategy and creating marketing materials, such as photos, videos and recipes, to support it. It has only actively conducted its marketing campaign with prominent chefs during the last two years. The Web site, photos, videos, recipes and social media campaigns provide significant benefit to everyone in the industry, from wharf owners to major seafood companies. In the absence of these materials, the visibility of Maine lobster and potential to gain new customers would suffer significantly.

Finally, I believe the Collaborative has been extremely strategic in its work to date. They have identified restaurants in the U.S. market as a strategic, cost-effective place to begin their work. There is no lack of ideas about how to market Maine lobster. But it is the job of the Collaborative to identify those actions that have the greatest potential to be cost-effective and yield positive results. The U.S. market presents a tremendous growth opportunity for Maine lobster and targeting the sector where more than 80% of seafood is consumed is smart.

I believe it is overly simplistic to reduce the discussion of reauthorizing the Collaborative to investment-versus-boat price. After all, lobstermen make investments daily that may or may not directly pay off. Lobstermen continue to fuel their boats and bait their traps, even when days or weeks go by and this investment does not pay off. Lobstermen purchase insurance for their boats, though few ever make a claim. Running a business requires one to make investments that reduces the risk of failure. Continuing to fund the Maine Lobster Marketing Collaborative must remain one of them. The purpose of marketing is not to provide a silver bullet that solves all problems. It is to make the good times better and the bad times hurt a little less.

The MLA Board has already voiced its support for continue the Collaborative. It would be irresponsible for a \$500 million industry to simply do away with all marketing. Maine lobster is part of the global economy and we need to continue to invest in maintaining our brand, building strong demand for our product and avoiding the possibility of customers simply losing interest in Maine lobster in favor of another product. As industry leaders, the MLA will work to see the Collaborative continue and will explore options to improve it and provide greater accountability to lobstermen and others in coming years.

As always, stay safe on the water.

Patrice





# MAINE LOBSTERMEN'S ASSOCIATION UPDATE

## MLA STRATEGIC PLANNING MEETING SUMMARY

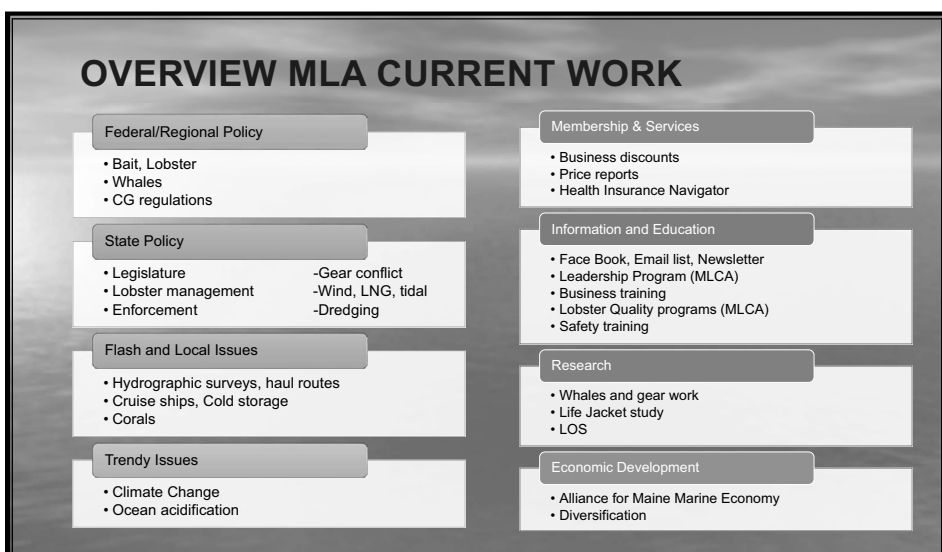
The MLA Directors met for a day-long strategic planning meeting on November 15. During the meeting the Board met with Dean Fred Servello, University of Maine, to discuss the future of the Lobster Institute. The discussion focused on fully leveraging the University's resources through the Lobster Institute to benefit Maine's lobster industry.

The Board first discussed the Maine Aqua Ventus (MAV) wind project now under development at the Monhegan Island test site. Concern was raised over how the project has been managed; there is significant anxiety over what the project could mean for lobstermen and fishing communities. As Maine's first offshore wind project, MAV has set a very poor precedent for how to work with local communities. A lack of transparency regarding the development and poor communication with stakeholders has produced a significant backlash against the project. A five turbine wind farm is operating off Block Island, and a 130 turbine wind farm is under development off Cape Cod, so how such a development is managed off the Maine coast is extremely important.

Specific concerns raised about the project include its changing scope, from a scale-model turbine with no electricity cable to mainland to two full-size turbines with a cable to the mainland; the proposed cable route to Port Clyde; the footprint of the wind turbines, including the cables and anchoring system; lack of communication about the planned bottom survey this fall; whether the environmental impact analysis mirrors the current version of the project; the negotiation of a benefits package for one group of stakeholders at the expense of others; and lack of communication with affected communities outside of Monhegan. As a result of poor communications, there is a fundamental lack of trust between the MAV team and the fishing community. The MLA Board voted unanimously to oppose the MAV wind development.

The Board reviewed the status of the New England Fishery Management Council's (NEFMC) proposed changes to the herring plan through Amendment 8, which could affect the overall herring quota and where midwater vessels are allowed to fish. The board reviewed the results of the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission's (ASMFC) recent vote on Amendment 3 to the menhaden plan which increased the overall menhaden quota, increased Maine's portion of the quota, and maintained the episodic quota and the small-scale incidental fishery allowance of 6,000 pounds per day. The MLA will review more closely ASMFC's proposal to change reporting requirements for lobstermen during its December and January meetings. The MLA will also consider the results of the zone council discussions on the future of the Maine Lobster Marketing Collaborative during its December meeting.

The board discussed the vast array of issues that the MLA engages in on behalf of its members. Given the growing policy demands and the impact these decisions could have on lobstermen, the board would like to see the MLA remain active on all the federal, regional and state issues it currently works on. To do this, the MLA must develop a financial strategy to support its work. The MLA does not currently have the staff to adequately represent the lobster industry on all of these issues. The board will explore fundraising methods to hire additional staff including a policy director to help staff meet the current demands.



The board began planning its annual meeting. Members will be invited to nominate candidates to serve on the MLA board through the end of January.

## OCEAN TIPPING POINTS CONFERENCE

In November MLA's executive director Patrice McCarron joined Kathleen Reardon of the Department of Marine Resources; Megan Ware from the ASMFC, Burton Shank of NOAA Fisheries, and Doug Grout of New Hampshire Fish and Game in representing the Gulf of Maine lobster fishery at the Ocean Tipping Points Workshop in Santa Barbara, California. Tipping points occur when small shifts in human pressures or environmental conditions bring about large, sometimes abrupt changes in a system.

The group attended in hopes of developing strategies to proactively address the effects of climate change on the Gulf of Maine lobster stock. While abundance is high, warming waters and reduced settlement suggest the fishery may be on the brink of a tipping point, as has occurred in the southern New England region. The Gulf of Maine lobster fishery provides an opportunity to explore new management strategies which consider not only changes in fishing and natural mortality but economic consequences. The Ocean Tipping Points workshop provided new tools for managing systems in flux, including identifying thresholds, early warning indicators, and trade-off analysis. The trade-off analysis allows managers to weigh the costs and benefits of management changes versus the economic loss or gain from the action.

## ASMFC INCREASES MENHADEN QUOTA

The ASMFC approved Amendment 3 to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan (FMP) for Atlantic Menhaden. The Board increased the total allowable catch (TAC) for the 2018 and 2019 fishing seasons by 8%, from 200,000 to 216,000 metric tons. This increase has a zero percent change of over-fishing the resource. The 2017 Stock Assessment update indicated the resource remains healthy, with increases in abundance particularly in the norther states. The Board will review the results of the 2019 benchmark stock assessment to decide if it will use menhaden-specific ecological reference points to set the future TAC.



The menhaden quota is up for 2018 and 2019. NOAA photo.

Amendment 3 changes fishery allocations to improve the balance between gear types and jurisdictions. The commission gave each state, other than New Jersey and Virginia (including those with no historic menhaden fishery), an additional 0.5% of the overall quota and then allocated the rest of the TAC based on historic landings between 2009 and 2011 (see table below). In addition, Amendment 3 maintains the quota transfer process allowing states to swap quota and prohibits the rollover of unused quota. It also maintains the 6,000 pound trip limit for non-directed and small-scale gears following the closure of a directed fishery, and set aside 1% of the TAC for episodic events in the states of New York through Maine. The Amendment protects menhaden nursery areas by lowering the Chesapeake Bay reduction fishery cap by 41.5% , from 87,216 metric tons to 51,000 metric tons. This caps landings at current levels.

States must submit implementation plans to the Commission by January 1, 2018 for final implementation by April 15, 2018.

State Menhaden Allocations		
State	Former Allocation %	Amendment 3 Allocation %
Maine	0.04	0.52
New Hampshire	0	0.50
Massachusetts	0.84	1.27
Rhode Island	0.02	0.52
Connecticut	0.02	0.52
New York	0.06	0.69
New Jersey	11.19	10.87
Pennsylvania	0	0.50
Delaware	0.01	0.51
Maryland	1.37	1.89
PRFC	0.62	1.07
Virginia	85.32	78.66
North Carolina	0.49	0.96
South Carolina	0	0.50
Georgia	0	0.50
Florida	0.02	0.52

## NEC COMMERCIAL FISHING SAFETY ADVISORY BOARD

The MLA is part of the Northeast Center (NEC) Commercial Fishing Advisory Board. Commercial fishing fatalities continue to be too high. In the Northeast, there were 141 commercial fishing deaths from 2000 to 2016. Of those deaths, 44 were in Maine. The primary cause was vessel disaster (77 deaths) followed by falls overboard (31). There were 30 deaths in the lobster fishery during this time period; 17 were from Maine. The primary cause for of deaths among lobstermen were falls overboard (17) followed by vessel disaster (9). Of the falls



## MAINE LOBSTERMEN'S ASSOCIATION UPDATE

overboard for lobstermen, the primary causes were gear entanglement (7) followed by trips/slips on deck (4).

NEC is continuing its study to identify a life jacket that would be comfortable enough to wear and safe to work in on deck. To date, NEC researchers have trialed nine different life jackets with lobstermen in Maine and Massachusetts. Some were tested during winter fishing; others during summer fishing. Researchers will work with life jacket manufacturers to improve designs. These designs will be piloted in select harbors in Maine and Massachusetts as this research continues.

### ZONE COUNCILS VOICE STRONG SUPPORT FOR MARKETING COLLABORATIVE

The Maine Lobster Marketing Collaborative (MLMC) gave a presentation at each of the seven zone councils during November. The Legislature must reauthorize the Collaborative during its winter session or it will sunset in October, 2018. MLMC's presentation provided background on the Collaborative, an overview of its marketing strategy, and results to date. The Collaborative also shared the results of the third-party audit completed by a University of Miami faculty, which concluded that the Collaborative's work to date has been successful and that it is well-positioned to build on its activities.



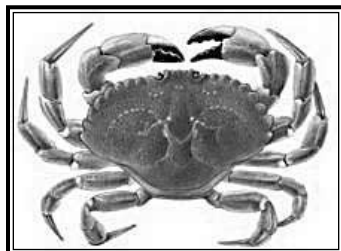
*Zone A Lobster Council members listen to MLMC executive director Matt Jacobson at their Nov. meeting. MLA photo.*

At each meeting there was considerable discussion about the Collaborative, with dealers and harvesters both for and against continuing the Collaborative. Those in support generally said that they were pleased with the Collaborative's work, that it was a relatively small investment to protect a billion-dollar industry, and that the industry must be prepared to invest in a marketing strategy over the long-term to see a real payoff. Those who were not in favor expressed frustration that there are no data to directly link the Collaborative's marketing activities to the market or the boat price, and voiced a need for more specific accounting of marketing expenses.

The zones weighed in: Zone A on 11/27 voted unanimous in favor; Zone B on 11/28 voted unanimous in favor; Zone C on 11/16 did not have a quorum but the six members present were polled as individuals and all were in support; Zone D on 11/2 voted in support with one not voting; Zone E on 11/20 had no quorum but the four members present were polled as individuals and all were in support; Zone F on 11/30 was unanimously in support; and Zone G on 11/6 voted 8 to 3 in support.

### JONAH CRAB CLAWS LEGAL TO LAND

DMR adopted rules that allow Maine's commercial lobstermen to possess up to 5 gallons of Jonah crab claws as long as the claws are detached at sea.



### ASMFC PROPOSES LOBSTER REPORTING CHANGES AND REVIEW OF AREA 1 AND 3 MANAGEMENT MEASURES

ASMFC is seeking input from the lobster industry on changing harvester reporting requirements. The Draft Addenda to the Lobster and Jonah Crab Management Plans propose using the latest reporting technology, expanding the collection of effort data, increasing the spatial resolution of harvester reporting, and advancing the collection of biological data, particularly offshore. Public hearings are scheduled on the ASMFC Draft Addenda on January 10 at 6 p.m. in Scarborough (location TBD), January 11 at 6 p.m. at Ellsworth High School, and January 16 at 7 p.m. at the Urban Forestry Center in Portsmouth, NH.

ASMFC is also considering the development of consistent management measures for the GOM/GBK stock, including gauge size and v-notch definitions through Addendum XXVII. Currently, disparate regulations allow lobsters protected in one LCMA to be harvested in another LCMA. A uniform set of regulations would add an additional biological buffer to the stock through the protection of spawning stock biomass across LCMAs. In addition, this action may address enforcement concerns, particularly regarding the sale and transfer of lobsters across state lines which are subject to different minimum gauge sizes.

### NMFS CONSIDERS CHANGES TO FEDERAL LOBSTER MANAGEMENT

NMFS is accepting comments on an Advanced Notice of Proposed Rulemaking until December 15, 2017. The ANPR seeks feedback on three issues:

1. In response to management action by ASMFC regarding the southern New England lobster fishery, NMFS is considering selecting a control date to restrict the number of permits or traps an individual or business entity may own, with specific emphasis on Lobster Conservation Management Areas (LCMAs) 2 and 3. Control dates under consideration include January 27, 2014, November 15, 2017, or another date, pending public comment and further input by the ASMFC. Participation in the fishery after the control date may not be treated the same as participation before the control date. Establishing a control date does not commit NMFS to develop any particular management regime or criteria for participation in these fisheries. This action is moving forward now because ASMFC voted to take no additional action on the southern New England fishery in August 2017.
2. NMFS is considering adding a provision to allow a substitute vessel to haul and fish the traps of a federally permitted lobster vessel that is inoperable or mechanically impaired. The intent is to allow a Federal permit holder to maintain his or her revenue from lobster fishing while the vessel is repaired or replaced. Currently, the regulations only allow a substitute vessel to bring the trap gear ashore; however, some states already permit the use of a substitute vessel to haul and fish traps under specific circumstances.
3. Due to enforcement concerns, NMFS is considering modifications to the gear marking requirement for lobster trap trawls with more than three traps to be more consistent with industry practices.

### HERRING UPDATE

Atlantic Herring Landings				
For Data through November 28				
Area	Cumulative Catch YTD	2016 Catch YTD (11/24)	Total Annual Quota	2016 % of Quota
1A*	27,047	27,935	30,083	84%
1B	2,636	3,573	4,825	55%
2	3,555	9,837	31,227	11%
3	13,987	18,058	43,873	32%
Total	47,227	59,403	102,656	46%

\*Quota June 1 thru Sept. 30 = 21,910; Oct. 1 thru Dec. 31 = 8,192

#### 2017 Spawning closures dates

Eastern Maine Spawning closure: Aug. 28 to Sept. 24; extended Oct. 16 to 30.  
Western Maine Spawning closure: Sept. 26 to Oct. 24  
Mass/NH Spawning closure: Oct. 1 to Oct. 28; extended Oct. 29 to Nov. 11.

### NOAA INCREASES AREA 1A ATLANTIC HERRING QUOTA

The Atlantic Herring Management Area 1A quota was increased by 1,000 metric tons (mt), from 31,115 mt to 32,115 mt for the period of October 24-December 31, 2017. This is due to an underharvest of the New Brunswick weir fishery. Based on the best available information, the New Brunswick weir fishery landed 1,724 mt through October 1, 2017.

### MLA OPPOSES MONHEGAN WIND PROJECT

The MLA informed Maine Aqua Ventus (MAV) in a November letter of the association's opposition to MAV's proposed Monhegan wind development project. The letter expressed the MLA's concern that the MAV wind project lacks an effective communication strategy. This has resulted in a complete breakdown in trust between the MAV team and the fishing community and left fishermen with many unanswered questions and concerns.

Specific concerns regarding the project stem from the change in plan for the Monhegan site from a 1/3-scale model turbine with no electricity cable to  
*Continued on page 10*



## MAINE LOBSTERMEN'S ASSOCIATION UPDATE

MLA continued from page 9

mainland to two full-size turbines with a cable transmitting 12 megawatts of power to the mainland. This revised project design has raised significant concerns among lobstermen about the proposed Port Clyde cable route, the location of the wind turbines' footprint including the cables and anchoring system, the lack of communication about the planned bottom survey and other details of the development, whether the environmental impact analysis mirrors the current version of the project, negotiation of a benefits package for one group of stakeholders at the expense of others, and the lack of communication with affected communities other than Monhegan.

As Maine's first potential wind development, the MLA believes that this project sets a very poor precedent on how to work with Maine's affected fishing communities.

### MLA SUPPORTS PORTLAND'S WORKING WATERFRONT

The MLA notified the Portland City Council in October of its support of the petition organized by Willis Spear to protect Portland's working waterfront in an October letter. The MLA has been concerned to see several proposals to redevelop properties that have traditionally supported Maine's fishing and marine industries along Commercial St.

The MLA noted that Portland's working waterfront continues to support many in Maine's lobster, herring and groundfish industry's. The wharf space that serves the region's lobster and bait fisheries is irreplaceable given the loss of working waterfront that has already happened in southern Maine. The lobster industry fuels the majority of Maine's coastal economy, and the bait landed on Portland's waterfront is critical to the continued success of the state's premiere industry. Portland area fishing industry leaders estimate that Portland's downtown waterfront infrastructure supports \$300 million worth of lobster, bait and groundfish landings. Portland's working waterfront is very unique and special and is worth protecting. It is valuable not only economically, but it also holds tremendous cultural, social and historic value for the city and the state.

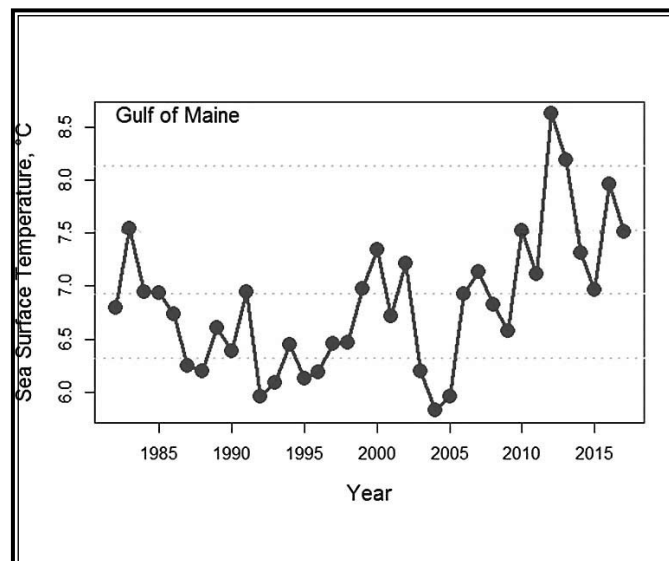
Tipping points continued from page 1

the Maine Department of Marine Resources, Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC), New Hampshire Fish and Game Department and the Northeast Fisheries Science Center, provided data on changes confronting Maine lobstermen as the Gulf of Maine continues to warm.

"We came to the conference hoping to learn from the collapse of the Southern New England lobster fishery. We thought if we could understand what caused that tipping point, we might be able to predict the likelihood of seeing a similar change in the Gulf of Maine lobster fishery," McCarron said. "Given the economic importance of lobstering to Maine, it is vital that we collect the data we need to predict when a significant change may be on the horizon and develop management tools which build resiliency and sustain both the lobster stock and our fishing communities."

The workshop was part of a four-year collaborative research project based at the National Center for Ecological Analysis and Synthesis in Santa Barbara. The project's goal is to understand and characterize tipping points in ocean ecosystems.

"The lobster fishery has experienced tipping points before, both in the rapid increase in landings in the Gulf of Maine and the rapid decrease in abundance in southern New England," said Megan Ware, lobster plan coordinator at the ASMFC. "This workshop provided us with the tools to analyze these ecosystem shifts so that we can better predict and prepare for tipping points in the future."



Average sea surface temperatures in the Gulf of Maine. NOAA graph.

Tipping points occur when human pressures or environmental conditions set in motion large, sometimes rapid, changes in ocean ecosystems. The new ecosystem state may function quite differently from the previous one, respond differently to management interventions, and provide different levels and types of benefits to people. The new systems affects people

## A NOTE FROM THE PAST

HORATIO D. CRIE, COMMISSIONER, ROCKLAND



STATE OF MAINE  
DEPARTMENT OF SEA AND SHORE FISHERIES  
ROCKLAND

June 30, 1933

Brother Fisherman:

We are passing thru a period of depression that has never before been experienced by anyone who is living to-day. The aftermath of every war has had a sad story to tell and the larger the conflict the greater the suffering and the sadder the story but so far we have always come thru and have each time reached higher peaks of prosperity and loftier ideals of living so when the depression struck us this time we were crippled because we had become accustomed to spending in a way that we no longer can continue because our incomes have been reduced at least 50%.

Previous to the slump in the price of lobsters we had built up a fleet of expensive boats with high powered engines that cost dollars to operate. Now we find ourselves confronted with a condition hard to overcome because the lobster business will pay little more than operating expenses. It is no fault of ours because previous conditions had perhaps warranted the expenditures we had made.

No doubt the conditions we are now passing thru will teach us all economy and we who are living today will profit by it, however, there is one phase of the situation that we must all take into consideration and that is to preserve our fisheries.

If we destroy our lobsters by lawless methods of selling undersized lobsters at a reduced price we are killing the goose that laid the golden egg and with meager returns for our labors and under lawless practices we can never return to prosperity because history has proved beyond a question of doubt that illegal fishing surely reduces the supply and when prices come back to normal, if we have a little to sell, how can we prosper?

The future of the whole lobster situation depends on the fishermen. The department will help but it cannot do anything without your cooperation. The Commissioner is pleading with Congress continually to do something to protect you against foreign competition and I feel certain that if we all continue to work that we will accomplish results, but do not lose sight of the fact that we must preserve our fisheries if we are to prosper in the future. Do not get discouraged and think conditions cannot be worse because they can be a great deal harder if all decide to sell the undersized lobsters that deplete the supply for when prices go up again you will have nothing to sell.

Yours very truly,

*H. D. Crie*  
Commissioner.

HDC/HLH

who make their living from the ocean as some species disappear, others arrive, and the ecological functions in the system change. Ocean tipping points are hard to anticipate and can be very difficult, if not impossible, to reverse.

For example, overfishing green sea urchins by Maine fishermen in the early 1990s decimated the population, leading to a rapid rise in kelp along the coast because there were no longer enough sea urchins to keep the kelp in check. Because more underwater habitat had become kelp forests, certain marine species that preferred kelp, such as crab and lobster, began to dominate. Even today, the number of sea urchins remains much lower than before the crash.

"The conference helped us take a hard look at the types of data we need to be collecting if we are to develop meaningful predictive tools for the lobster fishery," explained McCarron. "We were also introduced to a suite of tools that can facilitate difficult management decisions. I was most impressed by the potential of the trade-off analysis which allows you to compare the benefit of a proposed management action against the economic cost to the fishery to implement the measure."

The coastal economy of Maine is highly dependent on the lobster fishery. Yet in southern New England, once home to a thriving lobster fishery, lobster stocks have dropped dramatically in the face of rising sea temperatures and other environmental factors, putting the majority of lobstermen out of business. It's not hard to conceive of a similar decline happening in the Gulf of Maine, given that body of water's rapidly increasing temperature.

"From the conference I gained a greater understanding of what ecological tipping points are and how to identify them in the lobster fishery," Ware said. "The lobster fishery is complicated by the fact that there are likely multiple tipping points in our system, including water temperature, predation, fishing pressure, and habitat availability."

For more information about the science of ocean tipping points, visit <http://oceantippingpoints.org/portal/otp>.

Troll continued from page 1

few years ago and of course his main lure, or should I say 'Maine lure,' was all the lobster I could eat, so I bit!"

Troll lives in Ketchikan, Alaska. He moved to the state after receiving an MFA from Washington State University in 1981. There he was able to combine his lifelong interest in natural history with his artistic talents. At first, he created quirky T-shirts of fish and other creatures, which soon gained him an audience with cannery workers, commercial fishermen and others. His off-kilter paintings — in watercolor, colored pencil, oil, pen and ink, and acrylic — combined wry humor with vibrant renderings of fish, such as coho salmon and halibut, and dozens of other species found in Alaska. Soon he was featured in exhibitions in museums across the United States and overseas.

"Vinalhaven has long been an outpost and fan club of his work," Mesko said. "Now almost 40 years later it's hard to say where you might encounter someone sporting a Ray Troll T-shirt — they truly have a global audience."

Troll's art can be found in ten books he has co-authored and illustrated. The latest is a collection called *Something Fishy This Way Comes*, the title a spoof of the famous quote from *Macbeth*.



Troll also wrote and illustrated an alphabetical children's book of living and prehistoric sharks called *Sharkabet*, full of weird and wonderful pictures and facts about sharks, from angel sharks to zebra sharks. He also is part of a band, called the Ratfish Wranglers, noting on his web site that he believes "everyone should be in a band regardless of talent or ambition."

Troll's visit was supported by the Island Institute, Partners in Island Education, Grundens and the Tidewater Motel.



Troll enjoying a lobster sandwich on Vinalhaven. M.Mesko photo.

**Many thanks  
to these fine businesses,  
the MLA's Keeper members!**

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| Gulf of Maine Lobster Foundation | Midcoast Marine Supply                | Winterport Boot Shop                   |
| Guy Cotten, Inc.                 | Mount Desert Oceanarium               | Worcesters Lobster Bait                |
| Inland Seafood                   | New England Marine & Industrial Inc.  |  |
| Interstate Lobster Co.           | Nicholas H. Walsh, PA                 |  |
| Island Fishing Gear & Auto Parts |                                       |  |

## MLA Seeks Nominations from Members for Board of Directors

Don't miss your opportunity to influence the future of your industry

Annual Meeting will be held Friday, March 2, 2018 at 9am

### Did you know?

- MLA Directors are elected for a 3-year term
- MLA Directors meet monthly, except August, in Belfast.
- Board members expected to attend at least 4 meetings/yr.
- Maximum # of Board members: 21
- Current Board: 21 members
- **Number of Directors with Terms expiring: 8**
- Average age of MLA Board: 51
- Youngest MLA Board member: 26
- Oldest MLA Board member: 68
- Number of Board members representing islands: 4

### MLA Board representation by lobster zone:

- A 3 (2 expiring)
- B 3
- C 3 (2 expiring)
- D 6 (2 expiring)
- E 2 (2 expiring)
- F 3
- G 1

### 2018 Board Recruitment priorities

- Young lobstermen
- Dedicated lobstermen who care about the future of the industry
- Lobstermen who can talk about the industry's needs and priorities

### MLA Director Nomination Form (detach and return)

#### Nomination Requirements

- To make a nomination, you must be an MLA member in good standing.
- All nominees must hold a valid commercial lobster license and be an MLA member in good standing.
- Deadline for nominations: January 31, 2018.
- Feel free to nominate yourself, or someone else.

#### Nominee Information

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Fishing Port: \_\_\_\_\_

Zone: \_\_\_\_\_ Town of residence: \_\_\_\_\_

Please let us know how this nominee could contribute to the MLA Board:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

#### Nominator Information

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Lobster Lic. #: \_\_\_\_\_



**Thank you  
for helping to keep  
the MLA strong!**

Mail your nomination to the MLA office: MLA, 2 Storer St, Ste 203, Kennebunk, ME 04043

Or feel free to call in your nomination to 967-4555

or email: [patrice@mainelobstermen.org](mailto:patrice@mainelobstermen.org).

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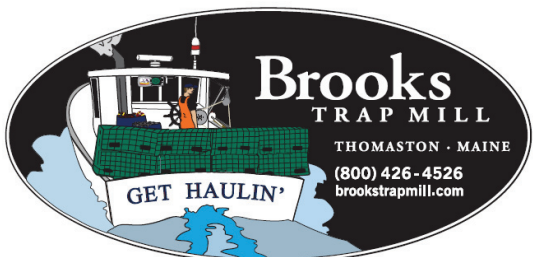
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## A brief holiday (lobster) gift guide

### Benoit's Design Co.

[www.benoitsdesign.com](http://www.benoitsdesign.com)

Laser-cut images, art, ornaments, glassware with a maritime content

Benoit's Design Co. is a Westbrook-based creative laser studio offering laser engraving, etching and cutting services in addition to a growing product line. Benoit's features an assortment of home décor including glassware, coasters, cutting boards and doormats. All products are designed in-house and built from hand-picked materials.



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<https://lobsteringisanart.com/>

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### Mark Fleming

<http://markflemingphoto.com/gulls-eye-view/>



Maine photographer Mark Fleming has been working on a project called Gull's Eye View which profiles Maine lobster boats from the air. Fleming currently is selling a limited number of prints. Boat captains receive a discounted price. If you would like to purchase a print or need more information, contact him at [mark@markflemingphoto.com](mailto:mark@markflemingphoto.com).

### Lobsterman's Natural Skin care

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## PEOPLE OF THE COAST: *The women of Jess's Seafood Market*

By Melissa Waterman

It's mid-November, a time when the tourists and summer residents have largely fled from the Maine coast. You would think that business would be quiet at Jess's Market, a small fish market on the south side of Rockland. But instead business owner Sharon O'Brien is on the phone with a customer who wants to have a large order of fresh lobsters delivered overnight to Savannah, Georgia. Daughter Lisa Wiggin is at one of two stainless steel sinks, hosing down a fresh salmon in preparation for filleting it. Twin daughters Katie and Jamie Wiggin are chatting with customers, overseeing the fish counter, and generally doing what they and their older sister have done since they were six years old – running the family fish market.

"You wouldn't be able to catch any of us if this was July," O'Brien said with a grin. In fact, the fish market, started by Sharon and her ex-husband, Jess Wiggin, in 1986, is a mini-hurricane of activity during the summer months when the market is besieged with customers from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m., six days a week.

The family market started out selling not fish but rather breakfast and lunch products. The distinctive wooden door between two coolers was the door to the beer room, O'Brien explained. One day she started selling containers of fresh-picked crab, picked by her mother. "That took off," she said. "So we started to stock what people asked for."

In 1986 Rockland was awash in fish. Along the waterfront Stinson and other large companies were busily processing herring and groundfish and nearly every local resident had a relative or a friend from whom they could get seafood when they wanted it. "We started with local haddock, halibut and oysters. We didn't buy any cod, because everyone had cod," O'Brien recalled. Local fishermen would bring their catch to the market; Sharon and her husband would buy what they thought they could sell. Their three daughters learned to filet fish while in grade school.

In 2004, Sharon and her husband divorced. But rather than close the business, Sharon decided to buy her husband's part of the market. "We all worked here together and I didn't want the kids to lose that. It took a while," O'Brien said. The three daughters work well with each other, though as Lisa is quick to say, "We have our differences sometimes!"

The four women agree that making a fish market successful takes a suite of skills, among which are physical strength and a good understanding of customers' desires. "People now want a variety of products that years ago no one had



From left to right, Lisa, Jamie, and Katie Wiggin and their mother, Sharon O'Brien. M. Waterman photo.

ever heard of," explained Lisa. She notes the large number of quality restaurants in the area, from high-end sushi restaurants to award-winning Primo's just up the street. "We sell wholesale to restaurants and there are many more restaurants now than before. So we can sell something unusual, like bronzini [a fish popular in Europe] to a restaurant and then sell that fish here. There are foodies around that want it," Katie said. Jess's market stocks everything from whole Norwegian salmon to soft-shell blue crabs and shad roe in season.

Much of the seafood is trucked from Boston and Portland. The women are extremely aware of the regulations that govern fishermen these days. "Most of the fishing happens on Georges Bank," said Jamie. "There aren't the places to land here that there used to be so the boats go to Massachusetts." They try to buy as much local seafood as they can. This summer blue fin tuna turned up in larger-than-usual numbers offshore and so the market sold a lot of locally caught tuna. "We try to get what people want to buy," she added, so their sources of seafood have had to expand.

Continued on page 22



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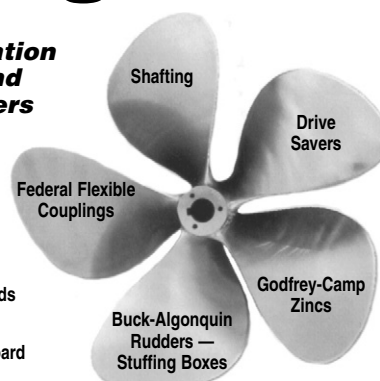
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## SOUTH BRISTOL WOMAN MAKES TRUE GIFTS FROM THE SEA

By Melissa Waterman

New Englanders are notoriously thrifty souls, known for saving string and bacon grease. It pains many a Mainer to throw out anything that might, someday, be put to good use. Tenley Seiders of South Bristol understands that notion well. She was working as a sternman with her husband, lobsterman John Seiders, one day about fifteen years ago and noticed once again that many lobsters had dropped a claw.

"Those add up to lost pounds for the lobsterman and it diminishes the value of the lobster because people typically want to buy a whole lobster," she said. "The meat starts to decay as soon as the claw falls. So it's a complete loss." But not to Seiders.

As a child and young woman, Seiders had come to Rutherford Island each summer to stay at her great-grandmother's home. Down the road from the family's home lived an older woman whom Seiders quickly adopted as a friend. "I would go down there and hang out with her," she recalled. During the winter months the woman's grandson, John, would haul firewood in for Seiders' great-grandmother. John, the son of a lobsterman, soon had his own boat and gear. Some years later, the two young people met and fell in love.

Seiders moved north from Philadelphia and before long, she was on the stern of her husband's boat, *Comin' or Goin'*, and thinking about lobsters. Earlier she had made jewelry as a side business to her work as a wedding and event planner. Now she considered that craft again. "I played around with the lobster shell, seeing if I could shape it. It took a while, but my husband's understanding of boat materials and my experience with jewelry finally came together," she said.

Seiders takes cooked lobster shell and first pounds the shell, then grinds it fine with a mortar and pestle. She places the result within a setting of sterling silver



Top: A snowflake pendant made of red lobster shell.  
Bottom: Tenley and John aboard *Comin' or Goin'*. Photos courtesy of T. Seiders.

or 14- or 18-karat gold plate. With advice from her husband, she discovered an epoxy product similar to the gel coat on a fiberglass boat which she uses to embed the crushed shell in its setting. One of the striking elements of Seiders' jewelry is the strong colors in her pieces. The vibrant red of a cooked lobster comes through loud and clear, not faded as often happens when the shell is long exposed to sun. "I use the same preservative as John does on his buoys," Seiders laughed. "It's Filter Ray and it protects from UV light." The lobster shell comes from her husband and from Isle au Haut lobsterman John DeWitt. A card explaining where the lobster was hauled and by whom is attached to each piece of jewelry.

Seiders remains fascinated by the colors and hues of things found along the beach. She also makes jewelry from mussel and oyster shells, which gleam as if covered in water. "You can't really improve on the beauty of nature. But it never looks the same when you bring it home," Seiders said. "I want to recapture that moment of discovery, when you first see something and go, 'Wow!'" She also wants those who buy her lobster jewelry to understand the complexity of Maine's lobster fishery. "There are just so many aspects to the industry. I want to get people to realize that there's more going on than just a lobster dinner off Route 1."

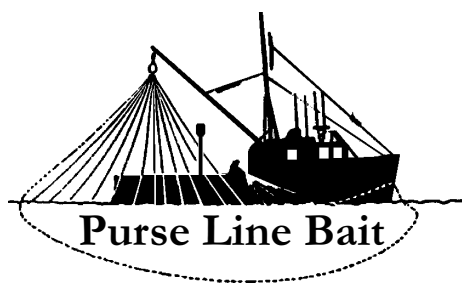
Marketing her home-made jewelry turned out to involve a learning curve for Seiders. She admits that she has always been something of an entrepreneur, selling dried-flower wreaths made of her own flowers rather than

lemonade by the side of the road when she was a child. She started selling her jewelry the same way, from a roadside stand near her home. Soon she was selling at local craft shows and summer fairs. Finally, the day came when she felt her pieces were ready to be in established stores. Seiders cold-called stores she

Continued on page 18

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## 2018 HEALTH INSURANCE ENROLLMENT ENDS DEC. 15

By Bridget Thornton

With the open enrollment period cut in half this year, your window to sign up for health insurance is closing quickly. Open enrollment ends December 15th and if you do not sign up now, you will have to wait until next fall to get coverage unless you qualify for a special enrollment period. The Maine Lobstermen's Association's (MLA) health insurance Navigator is available to help you with the process. We know it can be overwhelming but that's why we are here -- to help you every step of the way and get you enrolled in a plan that will work for you and your family.

We've been busy at work since open enrollment started on November 1st and are encouraged by the number of people who have called to set up appointments. The federal government cut advertising by 90% this year so we tried to fill that void by connecting on social media, the MLA weekly email blasts, and events in the community. Marketplace enrollments are up by 45% this year compared to this time last year!

The MLA has been helping lobstermen, their families, and the community with health insurance enrollment since November 2013, when the health insurance Marketplace was launched. MLA Navigators make themselves available for phone consultations during evening hours and weekends so we can be sure to reach as many people as possible. We've spoken to all sorts of people, from those who are enrolling for the first time to those who are re-enrolling for the fifth time. We are happy that you know we are still here and ready to help.

MLA's Navigators take the time to understand your situation and what your needs are. We know that no two people are alike and thus everyone's health insurance needs are going to be different. We will talk through any questions you have about coverage and compare plans with you to make sure you enroll in a plan that fits your budget and your needs. We know that this is an important decision to make and will never rush you into a plan that you don't feel comfortable with.

The Marketplace has new plans and prices every year so even if you are already enrolled in a health plan for 2017, it's always a good idea to shop around and

see what the options are. Your 2017 plan may be offered in 2018 but the deductible and out-of-pocket costs may have changed. MLA's Navigators can help you compare your current plan to the plans being offered in 2018; it takes just a few minutes to be sure that what they are offering will continue to work for you in the new year.

Our work doesn't end once open enrollment is over. We are here to help you throughout the year for things like making an appeal to the insurance company, helping to find a primary care doctor, and other issues that may arise. MLA's Navigators will do follow-up calls to check in and make sure you have the support you need. While we hope that everyone stays healthy throughout the year, you never know when something may happen — a trip to the emergency room, an unexpected surgery. If this happens to you, let us know. We can connect with the insurance company to see what your expenses, if any, will look like.

If you have questions about your health insurance options, we can meet one-on-one for free over the phone, through remote computer access using GoToMeeting.com, or if you're able to come into the MLA office in Kennebunk, we can meet with you there. Remember that the clock is ticking! Please don't hesitate to contact the MLA at 207-967-4555 or email [bridget@mainelobstermen.org](mailto:bridget@mainelobstermen.org).



*Bridget Thornton is the MLA's health insurance Navigator. MLA photo.*

*Seiders continued from page 17*

thought might be interested in her one-of-a-kind jewelry, a task that she found not always comfortable. The Island Institute's craft store, Archipelago, picked up her lobster and mussel pieces and ultimately asked Seiders to be part of the 2016 Artists and Makers conference.

She appreciates being able to make something of beauty while also caring for her two young children, ages 5 and 7. "I'm happy with the size of the business now. I may get up to 25 stores but you have to remember, these are one-of-a-kind things. They aren't mass produced and they do take some time!"

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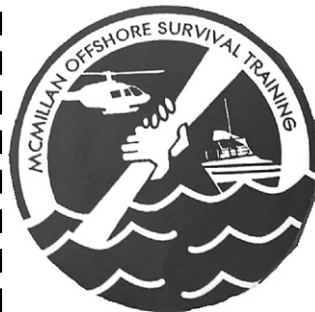
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Please call Bridget Thornton at 967-4555 or email [bridget@mainelobstermen.org](mailto:bridget@mainelobstermen.org).

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Deer Isle, ME -- Discounted annual subscription rate for \$18.75 with MLA membership noted on check. 800-989-5253

### National Fisherman

Portland, ME -- Special annual subscription rate for members. Contact the MLA for more info 207-967-4555

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### Nautilus Marine Fabrication, Inc.

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### Applied Refrigeration Services

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### Liferaft Services, LLC

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# FISHERIES OF THE UNITED STATES 2016 SHOWS VALUE OF LOBSTER, SCALLOPS IN NEW ENGLAND

From NOAA press release

U.S. commercial fishermen landed 9.6 billion pounds of fish and shellfish in 2016, valued at \$5.3 billion. These figures represent a small decrease in pounds (1.5%) and an increase in value (2.1%) over 2015. Volume and value remain similar to recent years.

Alaska led all states in both volume and value of landings, decreasing 7% in volume and 12% in value.

Americans consumed 4.8 billion pounds of seafood in 2016. The U.S. is the world's second largest consumer of seafood after China, according to data from the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. The average American ate 14.9 pounds of fish and shellfish in 2016, a decrease of 0.6 pounds from 2015.

RANK BY VOLUME OF LANDINGS	RANK BY VALUE OF LANDINGS
Alaska (5.6 billion pounds)	Alaska (\$1.6 billion)
Louisiana (1.2 billion pounds)	Maine (\$633.7 million)
Washington (551.9 million pounds)	Massachusetts (\$522.2 million)
Virginia (363.3 million pounds)	Louisiana (\$407.2 million)
Mississippi (304.1 million pounds)	Washington (\$321.1 million)

For the 20th consecutive year, Dutch Harbor, Alaska led the nation as the port with the highest volume of seafood landed (770 million pounds valued at \$198 million). Alaska pollock (walleye) made up 89% of the volume and 44% of the value. High-value snow crabs and king crabs accounted for an additional 14% of the value of Dutch Harbor landings and 1.7% of the volume. For the 17th consecutive year, New Bedford, Massachusetts had the highest valued catch (107 million pounds valued at \$327 million), due in large part to the highly valued sea scallop fishery. Stonington, Maine, came in 11th in value, increasing from \$64 million in 2015 to \$68 million in 2016. Vinalhaven was 23rd in value, moving from \$40 to \$42 million in 2016.

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**Thank you !**

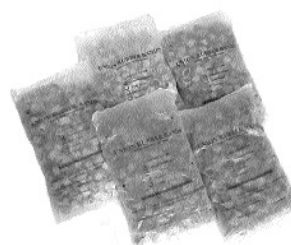
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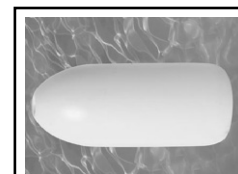
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## In the NEWS

### LUKE'S LOBSTER LAUNCHES LOBSTER LADIES CALENDAR

Luke's Lobster has produced a new calendar titled "Lobster Ladies 2018" featuring 12 Maine women who are involved in the lobstering industry. It includes Captain Krista Tripp, owner of the *Shearwater*; Katherine Thompson, Maine Department of Marine Resources' lobster scientist; and several lobster ladies of the future such as Bea Amuso, age 17, of Isleford and Sophia and Scarlett Miller and their cousins Gwen and Willow Miller, all of Tenants Harbor. "The idea behind the calendar was to represent the entire industry, not just the women who are captains and stern ladies, but the women behind the scenes as well, the scientists, lobster shack proprietors, bait dealers. They are all important players," said Luke Holden, founder and CEO of Luke's Lobster. All proceeds from the sale of the calendar, which is available online at [www.lukeslobster.com](http://www.lukeslobster.com), will benefit the Maine Lobstermen's Community Alliance.

### CANADA SEARCHING FOR CHANGES TO FORESTALL RIGHT WHALE DEATHS

Canadian fisheries experts are on a tight timeline to figure out changes to the snow crab fishery to protect endangered right whales in the Gulf of St. Lawrence before the 2018 season starts. The season opens in April and is concentrated in the Gulf of St. Lawrence and Northumberland Strait, where more than a dozen right whales were found dead this year. The Department of Fisheries and Oceans Canada solicited ideas from fishermen and industry officials in November. One of the ideas was starting fishing earlier so fishermen could possibly reach their quota before whales arrive.

### MENHADEN QUOTA INCREASED FOR 2018-2019

The Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC) Atlantic Menhaden Management Board met in November and approved a 216,000-metric-ton total allowable catch (TAC) for 2018 and 2019, an 8% increase. The panel gave itself the flexibility to lower the threshold should its staff come up with new ecologi-

cal reference points (ERPs) that suggest a reduction is needed. Managers also reallocated the quota among states resulting in all states, except for Virginia and New Jersey, getting an increase. The Chesapeake Bay catch will be cut back by more than 40%, from 87,216 metric tons to 51,000 metric tons. Most of the menhaden caught in the Chesapeake go to a major processing facility in Virginia operated by Omega Protein, which uses the fish to produce food ingredients, dietary supplements and animal feed.

### RIGHT WHALE TRAVEL PATTERNS TRACKED

In a wide-ranging study using data from 2004 to 2014, a team from the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institute concluded that North Atlantic right whales are spending more time in the mid-Atlantic since 2010 and have decreased their presence in the northern Gulf of Maine. The whales also aren't showing up in the Bay of Fundy as frequently, choosing to feed along the East Coast year-round, where they previously were only seen for a few weeks passing through. There also appears to be a growing stable population in the Cape Cod Bay area, according to the study, which processed more than 35,600 days of data from 324 listening devices from Florida to Canada. Most of the data was gathered by hydrophones which are weighted to stay on the ocean bottom. The receivers pick up the whales' low-frequency modulated sound, known as an up-call. The data was contributed by 19 organizations in the United States and Canada, including the latter's Department of Fisheries and Oceans.

### DMR TO OFFER NEW SCALLOP LICENSES

The Maine Department of Marine Resources is putting finishing touches on a new regulation governing new scallop licenses in state waters. The department would issue two new scallop dragging licenses annually for every three surrendered. The department would also issue one new diving license for each one not renewed. Currently, there are about 635 outstanding licenses to fish for scallops in Maine waters, about 560 for draggers, the balance for divers. Of those, about 450 were actively fished last year. No new licenses have been issued since 2009. According to DMR, the average age of scallop license holders is about 51. Lottery applications would be limited to Maine residents at least 18 years old who hold a Maine commercial fishing license that has not been suspended for at least seven years or who has served as crew on an active scallop boat. Every applicant would be entitled to at least one chance in the lottery. Each dragger and diver license applicant would also qualify for additional chances based on the number of years they've taken part in the fishery since 2009 and the number of years between 1995 and 2009 that they held scallop fishing licenses.

### DMR TO OFFER ADDITIONAL ELVER LICENSES

The Maine Department of Marine Resources is accepting applications for the elver license lottery until January 15, 2018. The lottery is available to Maine residents who are at least 15 years of age by the start of the 2018 season. At least seven new licenses are to be issued for the 2018 season, which starts March 22, 2018. Each new license holder will receive a minimum of four pounds of quota, which at the most recent season's average value could amount to nearly \$6,000 of income. The number of licenses is capped at 425. Individuals can enter the lottery online or in person at the DMR offices in Augusta. Individuals may submit up to five applications at a cost of \$35 per application.

*People continued from page 16*

When asked if the largely male world of fishermen and dealers has ever been problematic, the daughters laugh. "The local guys all know us. We've worked here since we were kids," Lisa said. "It's not like the corporate world. They respect us because they know we work hard."

During its 32 years, Jess's Fish Market has been recognized by Down East magazine and others as a top-notch seafood market. Sharon looks to the market's future with a realistic view. "It's a juggling act, that's for sure," she said, gesturing toward the fish counter as her daughters return to work. She has five grandchildren at the moment, with a sixth due in the new year. "I guess we'll keep doing this with the family."



*There's rarely a slow moment at Jess's Seafood Market in Rockland, M. Waterman photo.*



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# Events Calendar

You can find more information, links, and photos at [www.mainelobstermen.org](http://www.mainelobstermen.org). And let us know if you have upcoming events!

## December 5-7

New England Fishery Management Council meeting, Newport, RI

## December 5

Health Insurance Assistance, 1-4 p.m., the Oasis Free Clinic, Brunswick.

## December 6

MLA Board of Directors meeting, 5 p.m., Darby's restaurant, Belfast.

Health Insurance Assistance, 6-7:30 p.m., Knox County Free Clinic, Rockland.

## December 12

Maine Lobster Marketing Collaborative meeting, Island Institute, Rockland.

## December 14

Lobster Advisory Council meeting, 4 p.m., DMR offices, Augusta.

Health Insurance Assistance, 8 a.m.-noon, the Oasis Free Clinic, Brunswick

"Fishing Fallacies: Modern Realities of Harvesting Fish from the Sea," 7 p.m., Gulf of Maine Research Institute, Portland.

## December 15

2018 Health insurance enrollment period comes to an end.

## December 16

Portland Harbor Parade of Boats, 4:45 p.m., Portland.

## December 19

Shellfish Advisory Council meeting, 10 a.m., DMR offices, Augusta.

## UPCOMING

### January 10

ASMFC Public Hearing on Lobster Draft Addendum XXVI, 6 p.m., Scarborough, place TBD

### January 11

ASMFC Public Hearing on Lobster Draft Addendum XXVI, 6 p.m., Ellsworth High School.

### January 18-21

Massachusetts Lobstermen's Association Annual Weekend and Industry Trade Show, Resort and Conference Center of Hyannis, MA. FMI: 781-545-6984.

### January 30-February 1

New England Fishery Management Council meeting, Portsmouth, NH.

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Marine Patrol continued from page 1

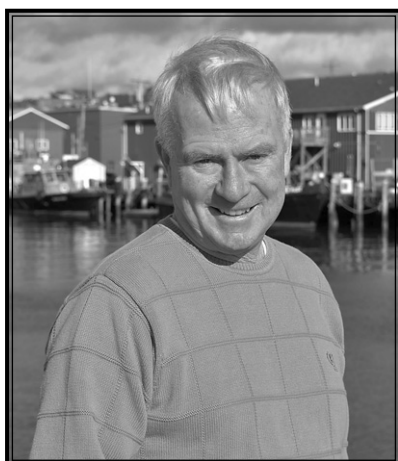
the years," said Neelon. One incident made clear to him the camaraderie Maine fishermen feel toward each other. "I recovered the body of a scallop diver who ran out of air. When we brought him to shore, all the fishermen in that community took his body and cared for it. It was like a ceremony. They were taking care of their own," said Neelon.

Having worked his entire career in the Portland area, Neelon has gotten to know the waterfront and the people who earn a living there. "My first Lieutenant, Danny Morris, told me to get to know the fishermen and their families," said Neelon. He took that advice to heart and soon realized how important it was. "When you go to a grocery store, you end up talking with fishermen. That's a part of the job I loved," said Neelon. "If you love dealing with fishermen and being on the water, it's the best job in the world."

"I had the fortune of working with Captain Neelon early in my career in the field," said Marine Patrol Colonel Jon Cornish. "Those boat patrols with Mike at the helm were certainly some of my fondest memories. Mike was an exceptional boat specialist only surpassed by his relationships with fishermen and the industry. Mike's retirement will be a big loss for Patrol."

Brian Tolman, who began his career in the Marine Patrol in 1985, fished for lobsters for 14 years before joining the Bureau. "I got my own outboard and started lobstering in 1971 at 12," said Tolman, whose family had moved from Massachusetts to Owls Head the previous year. He continued fishing, worked on the stern of other lobstermen's boats, and worked for a local dealer through high school to save money for college. After receiving a degree in Environmental Science from Unity College, Tolman decided to put his background and education to work. "This career chose me," said Tolman.

Tolman was initially stationed downeast, working from Calais to Lubec, where he stayed for two years. He was then transferred to the Waldoboro and Port



Retiring MP Specialist Mike Neelon. DMR photo.

Clyde patrols, finally landing in the Vinalhaven patrol where he remained until his retirement this summer.

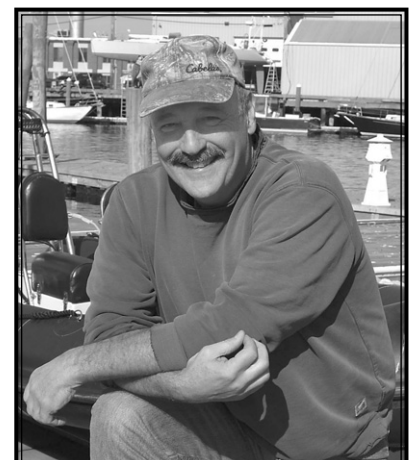
Tolman was one of the several officers who were involved in the department's Officer Salty program, which brought marine education and stewardship to local schools. "I enjoyed sharing my knowledge and passion for the marine environment with young people." Throughout his career, he has also made it a priority to build relations with fishermen. "Fishermen on Vinalhaven are second to none," said Tolman. "The interactions with fishermen are what I will miss the most."

Building relationships with fishermen has helped Tolman do his job over the years. "Fishermen are the best contacts. They know what is right and what is wrong and they share that information. But if they don't trust you, it will make it hard."

Tolman gives credit to his training officer Robert Burns, Sergeant George Openshaw and Lieutenant James Carroll for establishing the enforcement standards that guided him through the years. "They set the standard for enforcement that I followed throughout my career," said Tolman. It was those standards that enabled Tolman to record some of the department's largest cases, including one in which he discovered a lobsterman in possession of 519 short lobsters.

After 32 years on the job, Tolman looks back fondly on the career that chose him. "I'm amazed at how quickly it's gone by," said Tolman. "That's a testament to how much I enjoyed my job."

"The Bureau appreciates all of the guidance that these two officers provided to new and younger officers through the years," said Colonel Cornish. "There is no substitute for knowledge gained through experience and both of these officers had a wealth of it."



Retiring MPO Brian Tolman. DMR photo.



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