Continued on page 11

From March 2 to 4, the Samoset Resort in Rockport will be a loud and crowded place. The annual Maine Fishermen’s Forum will once again pack the conference rooms and hallways with those involved in the state’s many commercial fisheries. “This year’s Forum looks to be a great one,” said Chilloa Young, Forum organizer. “The Trade Show offers new exhibitors, and there will be some very interesting seminars this year. We are particularly excited about the Red Cross Training for CPR and First Aid Training which are being offered for the first time at the Forum. We encourage everyone to take advantage of this opportunity!”

Thursday kicks off a full day of presentations on Maine’s shellfish industry. The soft-shell clam harvest in 2015 brought more than $22 million to the state, making it an economic mainstay of Downeast Maine. Yet warming water may prompt more shellfish bed closures due to toxic phytoplankton, such as...

The annual Forum is full of surprises. Photo by M. Young.

Continued on page 16

The commotion about cod bycatch has died down since the Marine Stewardship Council wrongly estimated in 2013 that 177,000 cod broke the surface in lobster traps each year. At the time, the New England Fisheries Management Council was preparing for a vote to close new areas sensitive to cod spawning. The Council voted against the measure, 14-1, prompting a sigh of relief from lob...

A cod in a University of Maine lobster trap. Photo by R. Boenish

The problem facing fishermen in the Gulf of Maine is that these delicate and slow-growing organisms are found where they fish. A proposed management plan by the New England Fisheries Management Council (the Council) may make certain areas of the Gulf off-limits to fishermen in the future.

The Council is considering options to protect corals in four designated coral zones spanning about 161 miles of federal waters, specifically Mount Desert Rock, Outer Schoodic Ridge, Jordan Basin and Lindenkohl Knoll. Options under consideration include a prohibition of fishing. Of the four proposed zones, Mount Desert Rock and Outer Schoodic Ridge are of particular significance to Downeast lobstermen who fish in those areas throughout the year.

The Council began to pay attention to cold water corals during its Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) Omnibus Amendment process in 2010-2012. Data analyzed during the EFH process showed existing coral areas in the Gulf of Maine; furthermore, the Gulf’s bathymetry suggested that it was likely there were other coral areas not yet discovered. After much deliberation, the Council decided to take coral protections out of the EFH Amendment and pursue a separate omnibus amendment to cover both deep-sea and inshore coral areas.

The Council decided to take coral protections out of the EFH Amendment and pursue a separate omnibus amendment to cover both deep-sea and inshore coral areas. The Council has discretionary authority to tackle this non-fishery objective through the 2007 reauthorized Magnuson-Stevens Act, which...
COASTAL OUTLOOK

Thoughts from MLCA President Patrice McCarron

It’s hard to say much about the month of February, other than it’s short. The weather is rough, the temperatures are bitter, and there’s not much happening on the water other than scallop boats setting dredges and lobster boats working offshore.

Yet in reality there’s a lot going on. Hundreds of businesses, organizations, scientists and fishermen are getting ready for the annual Maine Fishermen’s Forum, which takes place the first weekend in March. As we note in this month’s Landings, the Forum is always packed with important seminars that reflect what’s happening in the New England fishing world today. Plus it’s the one time in the year when fishermen and their families from Maine’s many commercial fisheries can meet, argue and have a good time.

One of the topics sure to raise some voices at this year’s Forum is the New England Fisheries Management Council’s proposed regulations to protect cold water corals found in the Gulf of Maine. According to scientists, cold water corals grow very slowly; over hundreds or if not thousands of years, and provide habitat for valuable species of fish. The extent of coral areas is not fully known, but potential damage from fishing gear has prompted the Council to propose specific management protections. Two areas are of concern to Maine lobstermen: Mount Desert Rock and Outer Schoodic Ridge. Landings reviews the process followed by the Council in creating the proposed regulations and actions that it will take in 2017.

There’s also a lot going on in the Maine Legislature. The new Joint Committee on Marine Resources, chaired by Senator Maker of Calais and Representative Kamiega of Deer Isle, will be reviewing a variety of marine-related bills. The DMR has submitted four bills covering an array of issues ranging from marine debris, hide baits, and enforcement, to how and why it experiences stress. His presentations on behalf of the lobster, explaining how its body functions and how it grows very slowly, over hundreds if not thousands of years, and provide habitat for valuable species of fish. The extent of coral areas is not fully known, but potential damage from fishing gear has prompted the Council to propose specific management protections. Two areas are of concern to Maine lobstermen: Mount Desert Rock and Outer Schoodic Ridge. Landings reviews the process followed by the Council in creating the proposed regulations and actions that it will take in 2017.

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An important topic for fishermen, in 2017 and in any year, is safety at sea. Fishing remains a dangerous occupation, which was highlighted last year with several tragic deaths. Existing survival craft requirements can be very confusing because they vary according to vessel type, distance offshore, time of year, and number of people onboard. In this month’s issue, Coast Guard District 1 Commercial Fishing Vessel Safety Coordinator Ted Harrington reviews Coast Guard regulations about life rafts.

The Maine Lobstermen’s Association has also been busy during these cold winter months. The MLA will be holding its 63rd Annual Meeting on March 3 at the Samoset Resort. All members are encouraged to attend. Later in the month, the MLA is offering a day trip to Seafood Expo North America, formerly known as the Boston Seafood Show. On Monday, March 20, lobstermen from throughout the state can climb aboard a chartered bus and head to Boston for the country’s largest seafood show, to see the thousands of offerings from seafood producers throughout the world. In March, the MLA and the Maine Lobstermen’s Community Alliance will again host lobster veterinarian Jean Lavallée of Prince Edward Island for a second tour of the Maine coast to talk about lobster. Lavallée speaks on behalf of the lobster, explaining how its body functions and how and why it experiences stress. His presentations were so well-received last year that the two organizations decided to bring him south again.

Proper handling practices apply not only to lobster but also to codfish. University of Maine graduate student Robert Boenisch is studying cod that wander into lobster traps and are inadvertently brought to the surface. The issue is important because cod stocks are at very low levels in the Gulf of Maine. If lobster traps contribute to their mortality, regulations could be applied to lobstermen to limit the use of traps.

Maine has a long history of interactions with the sea. Searsport, for example, was once the nation’s leading sea-port in the years before the Civil War. Today the town looks to the sea again but in a very different way: as the location for the Maine Ocean School. The magnet school would be a high school that uses the sea as its organizing educational theme. A group of marine industry professionals has been working on the structure and funding mechanisms for the school since 2015. This month they go to the Legislature’s Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs with a draft curriculum. If approved, the proposal goes to the full Legislature for approval.

Winter is hard on both humans and boats, as our final story this month illustrates. Mort Morgan planned to haul a few of his traps on a cold day in January. Little did he know his boat had sunk on its mooring. Getting the boat from the bottom on a day when the temperature remained in the low teens was not easy! But it was successful, as our article shows.

I hope that you enjoy this issue of Landings. We’d love to hear your feedback.

Patrice

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Keeping track of new laws and regulations is always a challenge but that challenge has been especially confusing and increasingly difficult for commercial fishermen these past few years. Most of that hardship can be attributed to the "out of the water" survival craft (inflatable liferafts and inflatable buoyant apparatus). Two months before the regulation came into effect, however, the law changed, resulting in suspension of that requirement. Additionally, buoyant apparatus and liferafts lost Coast Guard approval which would have necessitated anyone needing a survival craft to switch to the more expensive inflatable type. A more recent law change [what date?] has again allowed for approval of these types of survival craft.

The bottom line is that currently, despite all the legislative changes, nothing has changed for F/V survival craft carriage requirements; what was previously required is what is required now. The law still mandates a future requirement for out-of-the-water survival craft on F/Vs operating beyond three miles from the baseline but not until regulations are published by the Coast Guard. That process was started last year in a "Proposed Rulemaking" which informs the public of the Coast Guard's regulatory specifics and allows the public to comment. The comment period ended on December 20, 2016, and did address survival craft requirements on F/Vs. After the comments are analyzed, a Final Rule will be issued before the regulations become effective.

As a reminder, the requirement to carry an out-of-water survival craft in accordance with statute or regulation (see 46 CFR Part 28) still remains in effect. Here is a link to those current requirements: www.uscg.mil/d11/cfs/CheckLists/Regs/28.120.pdf.
The Super Bowl! Pats vs. Falcons. The big game is this month and I’m sure we will all be watching. But there is a bigger game going on outside the stadium, an expensive and important attempt to get attention from viewers for brands that different companies will display to the 110 million viewers in the U.S. They will pay about $5 million for 30 seconds of air time, and millions more to produce the commercial they hope will foster awareness and drive demand for their product or service.

Here at the Maine Lobster Marketing Collaborative, we don’t have $5 million to run a commercial during the Super Bowl, but we still want to reach a large audience. We want to increase awareness of Maine lobster in all its forms, and we want to spark demand for our product. Our strategy and goals are similar to the large companies advertising during the game, but our tactics are very different. In 2016, we worked with editors and producers at a variety of outlets like Food & Wine, Cooking Light, and the Morning Joe show to bring the story of Maine lobster to their audiences. And we reached one billion people. One billion people had an opportunity to see our story. The MLMC reached 10 times as many people as a Super Bowl ad, and we spent less than half the money.

But our activities in 2016 did not end with our media engagements. We understood that our supply chain is complex; the MLMC’s funding is limited. We focused our efforts on end users — chefs and culinary influencers — to increase preferences, we will have more tools to extract more value from Maine lobster.

Beyond our media outreach and events, we also focused on digital channels to reach an even larger audience. In fact, more than 675,000 people went to the MLMC website. Of those, more than 21,000 clicked on a dealer’s link, presumably to buy lobster from that Maine dealer. We learned a lot from our website traffic: people most often clicked on “how to prepare” articles and recipes. We will use those data to produce more content that shows people how to prepare different dishes using Maine lobster.

Our social media outreach also worked well for us in 2016. More than 2.3 million people viewed our videos. Many media outlets used our video as background for stories on Maine lobster. In addition to the videos, we reached more than 8 million people on channels such as Facebook. More than 153,000 people clicked on content and dove deeper into the messaging. We engaged with 311 influential chefs and media on different social media channels, nearly one per day. Each of these people has tens of thousands of followers who are likely to explore what these influencers suggest.

Through these face-to-face and virtual engagements we listened and learned a lot about what people interested in food are looking for. Through our partnership with Technomic, which monitors menu trends, we found that restaurant owners can charge a substantial amount more for a lobster item on the menu when they name Maine as the origin. This speaks to the value of our story and consumers' willingness to pay more for a quality product that they know was sustainably harvested.

We also learned that flavor pairings have become increasingly diversified when it comes to lobster. Asian flavors have risen to the top, whereas traditional items like butter have decreased. Brandy, curry, coconut, lime and mustard are the leading menu pairings with Maine lobster on menus around the country. This shows the importance of continuing to educate chefs, media, and consumers on the culinary versatility of Maine lobster, and featuring it as an ingredient vs. a center of the plate offering. As we learn more about our customers’ tastes and preferences, we will have more tools to extract more value from Maine lobster.

The MLMC had a good year. Our efforts were more effective than a Super Bowl ad. We reached more people, more often, and we learned much about their tastes and preferences. In 2017, we intend to do more. More events, more media outreach, and more chef engagement. We will continue to listen to our customers and report what we learn. We know for sure that the story of Maine — of Maine lobstermen, of a sustainable resource and way of life — will be the key to our success.
LOBSTER HEALTH EXPERT RETURNS TO MAINE IN MARCH

By Melissa Waterman

Who would have thought that a funny, fast-talking Canadian lobster veterinarian would be such a hit among Maine lobstermen? But Jean Lavallée, an expert on lobster health, took the Maine coast by storm last spring when he spoke to lobstermen and other industry members in each of the seven zones about how they can keep their lobsters healthy and their profits up.

Now Lavallée is returning. In March, the Maine Lobstermen’s Association in conjunction with the Maine Lobstermen’s Community Alliance will host Lavallée for a series of workshops on how to keep stress on lobsters down and a lobsterman’s profits up. This year’s tour will kick off on Saturday afternoon during the Maine Fisherman’s Forum and then travel the coast from southern Downeast Maine the following week to talk about the unusual physiology of the lobster and commonsense practices lobstermen can employ to ensure the highest quality catch regardless of the number of pounds hauled each day.

The workshops are supported by Maine Sea Grant and some of Maine’s lobster coops.

“The goal is to make sure that you harvest, transport and ship lobsters in the best way possible. What that way is may change by region or the time of year,” Lavallée said. “But fundamentally there are certain practical things that must be done.”

A lobster may appear to be as armored as a tank, yet its internal structures make it prone to injury. For example, a lobster’s nerve cord runs down its belly, without the protection of vertebrae. A cut from another lobster or a rough toss by a lobsterman can sever that cord, resulting in paralysis of the lobster’s tail and eventual death.

A lobster’s heart is on its back, where the carapace meets the tail. Whack a lobster on the back and the heart will likely rupture. Furthermore, a lobster has a semi-open blood circulation system. That means the heart pumps blood through ever smaller arteries until finally the blood vessels simply spill blood into the animal’s tissues. The blood doesn’t recirculate; it flows over the tissues all the time. As soon as a lobster’s shell is broken, then the blood comes out, weakening the lobster.

“Quality is like a one-way gas tank. You can take the quality out of the lobster but it’s very hard to put it back in,” Lavallée said. All sorts of things weaken a lobster. Rapid hauling from the bottom is one stressor. Minor injuries to lobsters also add up to lost money, he said. Practices such as tossing lobsters, handling traps roughly and overstuffing, dropping or banging crates can increase limb loss and bleeding. Lobsters that bleed lose fluid which means they lose weight which means a lobsterman loses money. Plus that lobster is likely to be weak when it starts on its trip to the processor or dealer. “Quality is as important to the processing sector as it is to the live sector,” Lavallée emphasized. “Processors live and die by meat yield. They want a high quality non-injured lobster to start with.”

Response from lobstermen after last year’s tour was very positive. Lavallée’s engaging style made the three-hour workshop pass quickly. “I have seen him three times and each time I learn something new” said veteran lobsterman John Williams. This year’s workshops are expected to draw bigger crowds.

Lavallée will speak at this year’s Fisherman’s Forum and then begin his tour in southern Maine on Monday, March 6. He will visit all seven zones as well as several island communities, wrapping up in Zone A on Saturday, March 11.

For more information, please call the MLA office at 967-4555 or visit www.mainelobstermen.org.

Making sure to handle lobsters properly adds to their value.

Photo courtesy of J. Lavallée.

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Board of Directors’ Meeting Schedule
All meetings take place at Darby’s Restaurant, Belfast, unless otherwise indicated.

Feb. 1, Noon
March 3, Annual Meeting, 9 a.m., Samoset Resort, Rockport.

MAINE LOBSTERMEN’S ASSOCIATION UPDATE

The winter is finally here and along with it come cold, dark, snowy and windy days. Winter signals the lobster industry’s shift into meeting mode. Meeting season brings with it many Maine-based and lobster Advisory Council meetings and legislative public hearings plus a host of other meetings in addition to the regular management meetings happening through the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission and the New England Fisheries Management Council.

The spike in meetings also coincides with the winter cycle of lobster fishing during which many lobstermen have their boats and gear up on the banks and are shifting to gear work in the shop. Those who are still fishing are jockeying weather windows to work on scallops or fish for lobster offshore.

The ebb and flow of the lobster fishing season is also felt at the MLA office. The meeting schedule puts a strain on staff as we try to cover as many important meetings as possible. And as traps come to shore, we tend to hear more from lobstermen. There’s certainly been plenty to get people’s attention this winter, not least of which was the election of a new President. The start of a new administration seems to have everyone wound up one way or the other.

The Maine newspapers have provided some early coverage of bills to be debated by the Legislature. Two that have generated significant controversy are the bill to beef up enforcement of sunken trawl and over-the-trap-limit violations through covert tracking devices and the potential for all marine license fees to increase. As I write this, the details of the bill on using covert tracking devices are not yet available. Nonetheless, many lobstermen are weighing in. There seems to be an acknowledgment that Marine Patrol needs more tools to provide effective enforcement in the offshore fishery, yet there also need to be proper checks and balances in place to control the use of covert tracking. Fortunately, this bill will be subject to public hearing and there will be ample opportunity for all to give their opinions.

The Department of Marine Resources (DMR) is proposing a license fee increase across all marine licenses. The increased license fees for lobster industry would be $38 for Class I, $76 for Class II, and $114 for Class III licenses; the last fee increase on lobster licenses (as opposed to a surcharge) was in 2010. All of the revenue collected from these increases would go directly to DMR to support the Marine Science program and provide funds for Marine Patrol. The increased license fees for lobster industry would be $38 for Class I, $76 for Class II, and $114 for Class III licenses; the last fee increase on lobster licenses (as opposed to a surcharge) was in 2010. All of the revenue collected from these increases would go directly to DMR to support its budget. The lobster industry will need to take a careful look at this proposal. Obviously, no one wants to pay more to go fishing, but the success of Maine’s entire coastal economy rests on the shoulders of the lobster industry. The DMR must have the funds to properly monitor the lobster resource and maintain the Marine Patrol Bureau. Turning our back on these basic needs would be short-sighted; the industry must explore options on how these programs can be funded.

The MLA caused a stir among many by distributing an enforcement survey in January to all lobstermen — both MLA members and non-members — via email. Throughout the past year, the MLA Board has been discussing concerns over the difficulty of enforcing many of our lobster conservation laws, particularly in offshore waters. Many violations about the MLA doing the enforcement survey. As I’ve said publicly, the only agenda the MLA has is to keep Maine’s lobster industry strong. The MLA wants lobstermen to be successful and earn a good living. But we also want to be sure that the industry is moving forward in a way that makes sense and that the resource remains sustainable. No one wants to wake up in ten years and wonder how we got to such a bad place!

In regard to the enforcement concerns that we are exploring, the MLA has heard from ALL sectors of the lobster industry that laws are being broken and enforcement is not adequate. The Board, to its credit, acted proactively to tackle this issue. And the Board has committed to getting feedback from all lobstermen, not just MLA members, on how this might be done. To my mind, exploring solutions to issues that face our industry and asking lobstermen their opinion about potential solutions should be beyond criticism. But, heck, this is the Maine lobster industry! To all of the naysayers out there, let’s be clear: the MLA wants to solve an issue recognized by all lobstermen and is doing its best to do so in a transparent and responsible way. It’s as simple as that.

Thank you to all who have taken the time to participate in the survey and to all of you who tirelessly support this organization. It means a lot! As always, stay safe on the water.
MLA DIRECTORS MEETING

The MLA Board met on January 4. Sarah Paquette informed the board that she will finish her employment with MLA this month. The Board thanked Sarah for her six years of service and wished her well in her future endeavors. MLA’s half-year membership drive will take place in March, with the regular renewal schedule again for summer time.

The MLA Directors discussed plans for the MLA Annual meeting on Friday, March 3 during the Maine Fishermen’s Forum. Given the MLA’s focus on improving and growing the organization, the board will invite Commissioner Keliher to serve as the keynote speaker and include Colonel Cornish and other Marine Patrol staff to answer questions. The MLA discussed nominees for the association’s Marine Patrol Officer of the year award and the Golden V-notch award. The Board also reviewed nominations to date to fill the seven board seats up for election in 2017. The slate of nominees will be finalized at the February meeting.

Patrice updated the board on the tremendous amount of press focused on the Affordable Care Act (ACA) as the country transitions to the Trump presidency. The board wants to keep the Maine delegation informed of both the strengths and weaknesses of the ACA based on its experience, but does not want to take a position on repeal or reform until there are detailed proposals to review. There are components of the ACA that have helped many and are worth continuing, however, too many lobstermen have experienced significant premium increases this year and found the coverage unaffordable. This must be remedied because lobstermen have no other options for health insurance and are subject to fines if they forego coverage. Health insurance enrollment for 2017 closed on January 31. After that date, you must qualify for a special enrollment to get a 2017 plan.

The DMR is holding three public hearings at the end of the month on several items including the proposed Hancock County Trawl Limit area in Zone B; 2) amending the exit ratio for Zone B to 3:1 with licenses; 3) creating an exit ratio for Zone C to 1:1 with licenses; 4) amending the exit ratio for Zone E to 5:1 with licenses; 5) creating a separate waiting list for existing lobster license holders wishing to change their declared lobster zone (a "transfer" list) and; 6) making minor clarifications for consistency with recent legislative changes. The hearings will be held in Ellsworth, Wiscasset and Portland.

The MLA Board discussed feedback they have heard on creation of a transfer waiting list. Patrice attended the recent rounds of zone council meetings to listen as well. Overall, lobstermen preferred a conservative approach such as a 1:1 even swap between zones. Lobstermen also supported a minimum threshold of activity by a lobsterman in order to qualify for transfer. The MLA Board concurred with this approach and discussed ideas to base the swap on comparable effort and to avoid transfer of any latent licenses.

The MLA Board reviewed the results of a preliminary enforcement survey that was distributed via email to MLA members in late December on how to improve enforcement of Maine’s lobster laws. The results were very informative and the board used the results to refine a new list of questions. The board tasked Patrice to develop a survey to send out to all lobster license holders via email to obtain feedback on the ideas that have been developed. The results will be reviewed at the February board meeting. The Board briefly reviewed the list of bill titles submitted to date, but none were printed so they were not discussed.

The Maine Lobstermen’s Community Alliance is moving forward with plans for the second Maine Lobstermen Leadership Institute. The kick off will take place on February 2 and 3 in Belfast. Maine Sea Grant has provided funding for the MLA to bring Jean Lavallee back in March for a session at the Maine Fishermen’s Forum and a series of meetings with lobstermen the following week. The MLA is hoping to partner with the state’s lobster co-ops to assist with these meetings.

LOBSTER ADVISORY COUNCIL

The Lobster Advisory Council met on January 10. DMR external affairs director Terry Stockwell provided several updates. The coral amendment is under development by the NEFMC. The NEFMC is exploring all management options, including closing the Mount Desert Rock and Schoodic Ridges coral zones to lobster fishing. The DMR does not support the closure so the state is seeking an exemption for lobstering in these areas. Working with MLA, the DMR has determined there are at least 100 boats from 15 communities that would be impacted. There will be a session on the coral amendment at the Maine Fishermen’s Forum; the NEFMC will hold public hearings to solicit feedback on management options this spring. The final rule could be completed as early as June. Anyone who fishes in the coral areas should contact Sarah Cotnoir at Maine DMR.

ASMF will review an addendum to the Jonah crab plan to allow lobstermen to possess a five gallon pail of Jonah crab claws without adhering to minimum size requirements. The ASMF will consider this addendum at its January meeting. There are two herring management approaches underway. The NEFMC is moving forward on Amendment 8 that addresses the amount of herring available in the quota for the commercial fishery and ongoing concerns by fishermen about localized depletion. The ASMF is exploring alternatives focused on the capacity of the herring fleet and how best to manage the Area 1A quota so that there is a steady supply of bait from June through September. The ASMF is also considering changes to the menhaden plan. There will be a session on herring management activities underway by the NEFMC and ASMF at the Maine Fishermen’s Forum.

The LAC briefly reviewed the list of bill titles related to lobster that have been submitted to date. None are printed so the LAC could not discuss the substance of the proposals. DMR staff described the bills submitted by the department. See Legislative update for more details.

DMR staff person Sarah Cotnoir provided an update on the waiting lists. The DMR sent letters to all those on the waiting list to confirm interest in remaining on the list. This resulted in 29 removals from the list resulting in 295 who remain on the list. As directed by the Legislature, the DMR is moving forward with rulemaking to establish a separate waiting list for zone transfers. Once this list is established, commercial lobstermen will be removed from zone waiting lists and placed on the new zone transfer list. Public hearings will be held in late January/early February. The zone transfer waiting list must be in place by April. LAC members stated that there is little support for establishing a zone transfer list within the lobster industry, however, this provision can only be repealed by the Legislature.

The LAC discussed a proposal from an LAC member to review the license class system due to concerns that vessels are carrying more than three crew. There was some support for vessels carrying more than three crew, particularly in offshore waters. This allows the vessel to maximize production when lobsterers are running and carry enough crew to tend traps during rough weather windows and properly handle lobster to maintain quality. This is largely a seasonal issue. Others argued that a vessel can easily manage the state’s 800 trap limit with three workers aboard the vessel and that allowing extra crew enables vessels to cheat by fishing over the trap limit. Additional concern was raised that captains are purchasing Apprentice licenses in order to legally carry additional crew.

Continued on page 8

Long-time staff member says good-bye

In January, the Maine Lobstermen’s Association bid farewell to Sarah Paquette, the organization’s executive assistant, who has taken a position with Connections for Kids, a licensed mental health agency serving children and families throughout the state.

Sarah came to the MLA in March, 2011, just a year after graduating from the Maine Maritime Academy. A Vermont by birth, her interest in marine biology had lured her from that landlocked state to Maine. Since starting with the MLA, Sarah has proved herself a highly organized and imperturbable asset. Sarah has worked closely with Patrice McCarron, MLA executive director, throughout her six years. “Whether it was managing our membership database, ordering T-shirts and hats for the Forum, making sure the rent was paid or being that friendly voice on the phone, Sarah did it,” said McCarron. “We’re really going to miss her.”

Drawing on her science background, Sarah also contributed numerous science articles to the Maine Lobstermen’s Community Alliance’s newspaper, Landings. She managed advertising accounts and billing for the newspaper and diligently proofed the paper each month. “It was always a relief to me to know that Sarah was looking over the paper,” said Melissa Waterman, Landings editor. “She was thorough and paid attention to all those details.”

Sarah leaves the Maine lobstering world for a new and exciting opportunity with Connections for Kids. We wish her the very best.

MAINE LOBSTERMEN’S ASSOCIATION UPDATE

The MLA continues to monitor a series of pressing issues including the coral amendment, menhaden management plan, Jonah crab addendum, herring management plans through NEFMC and ASMF and whale rules. The next MLA meeting will be February 1 at noon at Darby’s in Bellast. The MLA Annual Meeting will be held on Friday, March 3, at 9 a.m. at the Samoset during the Maine Fishermen’s Forum.

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Running large crews results in large landings which flood the market, which can negatively impact price. The LAC tabled this discussion for a future meeting.

LAC member Pete Daley raised concern regarding current management of the Lobster Seed Program. The Lobster Seed Fund is funded through lobster license fees with revenues averaging $75,000 annually. The fund is managed by the Commissioner with guidance from the LAC. Currently a small portion of the fund is used to compensate lobster pound owners for releasing egg-bearing female lobsters and a larger portion funds DMR lobster research. The LAC will review the allocation of the fund for lobster seed purchase versus research; the 2,000 pound threshold to participate; how price is calibrated; and how lobsters are liberated. This issue will be discussed at a future meeting.

DMR will be holding a series of public hearings on proposed rules on January 30 in Ellsworth, January 31 in Wiscasset and February 2 in Portland. The proposed rules include zone exit ratios for Zone B, C and E; Hancock County trawl limits and the establishment of a waiting list for zone transfers.

Colonel Jon Cornish provided updates on Marine Patrol. Marine Patrol has been consulting with NOAA Fisheries on the federal requirement to fish high-quality lobsters in high-quality zones.

Lobstermen may purchase up to 49% of second zone tags, so an additional tool to manage herring landings from Area 1A during the second trimester, from June 1 through September 30. The intent of the Addendum is to better design effort controls that can slow the rate of Area 1A catch so the seasonal quota can be spread throughout the entirety of each trimester, specifically Trimester 2. The addendum includes six alternatives to modify the Days Out program. The Herring Section will consider the Addendum during the February meeting.

The ASMFC Atlantic Herring Section convened a working group to discuss an Addendum and to flesh out ideas that could provide the ASMFC with more tools to manage herring landings from Area 1A during the second trimester, from June 1 through September 30. The Addendum is to be discussed at a future meeting.

The NEFMC herring committee met to discuss several items. The committee reviewed the outcomes of the recent Management Strategy Evaluation workshop held in December 2016 and discussed an initial range of alternatives for ABS control rules. The Committee supported the PDT and advisory committee's recommendation to eliminate a few options including the constant catch options and three-year control rules. The Committee reviewed the draft analysis for Georges Bank haddock accountability measures, and reviewed public comments on herring-related measures under development.

The RED Board met in January to discuss management of funds to support lobster research. As directed by the RED Board, the DMR will be coordinating lobster research activities among several research institutions. The RED board will continue discussion on supporting this research at a future meeting.

Marine patrol officers are being trained to recognize drug impairment. A discussion about mandatory drug testing for commercial fishermen will be on a future LAC agenda. The next LAC meeting will be scheduled in February to discuss lobster bills, among other items.

ASMFC HERRING WORKING GROUP

The ASMFC HERRING WORKING GROUP

The NEFMC HERRING COMMITTEE

The RED Board met in January to discuss management of funds to support lobster research. As directed by the RED Board, the DMR will be coordinating lobster research activities among several research institutions. The RED board will continue discussion on supporting this research at a future meeting.

Notice of MLA Annual Meeting

Friday, March 3, 2017
9am at the Samoset Resort

Did you know?
- MLA Directors are elected at the Annual Meeting
- MLA Directors meet monthly in Belfast
- Board members are expected to attend at least 4 meetings/yr.
- Maximum # of Board members: 21
- Current Board: 21 members
- # Directors with Terms expiring: 7
- Average age of MLA Board: 52
- Youngest MLA Board member: 26
- Oldest MLA Board member: 68
- Number of Board members representing islands: 4

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 30, 2017
- Feel free to nominate yourself, or someone else.

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.
MAINE LOBSTERMEN’S ASSOCIATION UPDATE

MLA COMMENTS ON ASMFC MENHADEN PUBLIC INFORMATION DOCUMENT

The MLA submitted comments in January to the ASMFC on the Public Information Document for Amendment 3 to the Atlantic Menhaden Plan. Menhaden remains a very important bait fish for Maine's lobster fishery. Sustainably managing local bait stocks such as herring and menhaden is fundamental to the continued success of the Maine lobster fishery.

Access to a steady supply of local baits – fresh or frozen – was a challenge in 2016. Due to a lack of landings from the offshore herring fishery, lobster bait scarcer and prices skyrocketed. While the availability of menhaden helped to meet demand, it was not strong enough to stabilize prices. Despite a strong year of lobster landings, many lobstermen have been frustrated that profits are down significantly due to the spike in bait prices.

Fortunately, the menhaden fishery is not overfished and overfishing is not occurring. However, under the current allocation system any increases in the Total Allowable Catch (TAC) will not benefit Maine or the bait fishery. In fact, of the 15 states allocated TAC, only Virginia and to a lesser extent, New Jersey, would realize any meaningful benefit from a quota increase under the current allocation structure.

From MLAs perspective, the status quo approach for allocating menhaden quota does not work. The significance of the menhaden fishery to the state of Maine and the lobster fishery should be considered when exploring a more equitable allocation among the states.

The ASMFC should consider a broad range of approaches for allocation including coastwide, seasonal, and regional quotas. Future allocation approaches should better reflect historic participation in the fishery through a longer-term reference period in order to more equitably distribute the TAC. The MLA would also like to see changes to the episodic events set-aside program. The current set aside is simply too small to adequately accommodate these events, and is also difficult for states to monitor and administer. Alternatives to significantly increase this set aside should be explored.

Under the current management approach, the lobster industry does not benefit as fishing opportunities for menhaden increase. The MLA strongly advocates that Amendment 3 fully explore options to change the allocation of the quota so that historic participation in the fishery is considered and the bait fishery is more equitably served. Thank you for consideration of these comments.

MLA COMMENTS ON ASMFC JONAH CRAB ADDENDUM

The MLA submitted comments to the ASMFC on the draft Addendum II to the Jonah Crab Plan. Maine lobstermen have long harvested Jonah crab as a side fishery for both commercial and recreational purposes. While crabs can be very cyclical in Maine, many lobstermen consider this crab harvest to be a part of their traditional fishery.

The passage of the ASMFC Jonah Crab Plan hurt many Maine lobstermen by making it illegal to harvest Jonah crab claws. While some lobstermen will harvest whole crabs, many have traditionally snapped off the claws and returned the crabs to the sea. The passage of the Jonah Crab Plan has made this practice illegal.

The MLA strongly supports Section 3.1, Option C, to allow claws to be detached and harvested at sea, without a minimum size, if the volume of claws is less than five gallons. This would allow a longstanding tradition for Maine lobstermen to continue legally. Thank you for consideration of these comments.

MLA COMMENTS ON THE DRAFT WHALE STOCK ASSESSMENTS

The MLA submitted comments to National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) on the 2016 draft Atlantic Marine Mammal Stock Assessments (SAR). MLA comments were specific to the Humpback Whale/Gulf of Maine and the North Atlantic Right Whale/Western Atlantic stocks.

As one of the fisheries highly regulated under the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA), the status of endangered large whales greatly impacts Maine lobstermen. The MLA has been engaged in the Take Reduction Team Process since its inception and our fishermen have worked diligently for two decades to implement changes in fishing practices to aid in the recovery of large whales.

With regard to the Humpback Whale draft stock assessment, the MLA strongly supports incorporating the findings of NMFS’ recent global status review of humpback whales into this assessment. The MLA supports broadening the assessment of humpbacks to reflect the West Indies Distinct Population, consisting of the humpback whales whose breeding range includes the Atlantic margin of the Antilles from Cuba to northern Venezuela, and whose feeding range primarily includes the Gulf of Maine, eastern Canada, and western Greenland. According to the MLA, the status of humpbacks reflects the West Indies Distinct Population. The MLA urges that all aspects of this stock assessment reflect this larger assessment unit (West Indies DPS) including population, productivity rates and assessing human-caused injury and mortality. With regard to human-caused interactions, the MLA has long been concerned with the former status quo approach which attributed all of these interactions to the Gulf of Maine stock simply because these whales could not be confirmed to another stock. The global status review provides the best available science on humpback. By using the West Indies DPS as the assessment unit, it will no longer be necessary to make assumptions about which smaller-scale feeding or breeding areas were used by the whales when analyzing human-caused impacts.

With regard to the North Atlantic Right Whale draft stock assessment, the draft SAR determines the minimum population to be ≥ 440 whales, which is a census of those known to be alive. Using a census is not an adequate methodology to assess this population given that much of the population is unknown during the winter, and recent shifts in habitat use patterns have resulted in fewer right whales being detected in known habitats. As noted in the report, “This apparent change in habitat use has the effect that, despite relatively constant effort to find whales, the chance of seeing an individual that is alive has decreased.” Right whale patterns and behaviors will continue to change, thus this marked-recapture approach to determine the minimum population is not adequate. This approach also ignores recent science which concluded, based on genetic testing matched to known calves, that the population of right whale males is ≤ 1000. The MLA urges that all aspects of this stock assessment reflect this larger assessment unit (West Indies DPS) including population, productivity rates and assessing human-caused injury and mortality. With regard to human-caused interactions, the MLA has long been concerned with the former status quo approach which attributed all of these interactions to the Gulf of Maine stock simply because these whales could not be confirmed to another stock. The global status review provides the best available science on humpback. By using the West Indies DPS as the assessment unit, it will no longer be necessary to make assumptions about which smaller-scale feeding or breeding areas were used by the whales when analyzing human-caused impacts.

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

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has been underestimated. Unfortunately, the patterns of habitat use are shifting or adequately determine the population size. This problem is further exacerbated by the new methodologies used to count serious injury and mortality: whales with unknown outcomes are now counted on a pro-rated basis. The combination of fewer right whales being observed in the annual survey while pro-rating serious injury and mortality of whales with unknown consequence could lead to very real management implications for Maine lobstermen regardless of the actual status of the stock.

Given the critical status of the species, it is imperative that NMFS develop a new method of assessing the right whale population that does not rely solely on sightings and photo-identification of these whales. The MLA strongly recommends that NMFS convene a workshop of independent scientists to review the best available science and potential modelling approaches to assess this stock. This task should not be delegated to science center staff but rather should involve scientists from a variety of marine mammal, modelling, climate change and other fields to objectively recommend the best approach to assessing North American right whales.

The draft assessment also raises concern about a potential decline in the population beginning in 2012, the most recent year of the assessment, but also notes involvement of scientists from a variety of marine mammal, modelling, climate change and other fields to objectively recommend the best approach to assessing North American right whales.

The first Regular Session after the cloture deadline if approved by the Legislative Council. Bills can be tracked online through the Legislature’s website at www.legislature.maine.gov. An update on the activities of the Marine Resources Committee is distributed weekly. Contact the Marine Resources Committee clerk, Julia Brown at 207-287-1692 or email Julia.Brown@legislature.maine.gov to get on the distribution list.

Bills that begin with “LR” or legislative record were not printed as of 1/23/2017. Descriptions of “LR” bills were provided by Maine Department of Marine Resources for department bills and by the bill sponsor for those submitted by legislators. Bills that begin with “LD” or legislative documents are printed so the full text of the bill is available. The effective date for non-emergency legislation is 90 days after adjournment. Emergency legislation is effective when signed by the Governor.
the unusual closures that occurred throughout New England due to domoic acid last fall. Participants will be able to question Department of Marine Resources (DMR) biologists about testing programs and other activities related to shellfish management.

That afternoon, the Maine Lobstermen’s Association is hosting officials from NIOSH (National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health) to lead a seminar on improving fishermen’s safety at sea. “Giving Safety a Competitive Advantage” will focus on preventing death due to a fall overboard by use of a personal flotation device (PFD). A multi-year NIOSH research project kicked off this winter and the first phase involves working with lobstermen from Maine and Massachusetts to test wear a variety of PFDs and make suggestions on their redesign so that they are more comfortable and easier for lobstermen to work in. The Forum seminar will give participants an opportunity to try on various models of newer PFDs, discuss barriers to working in PFDs aboard a vessel and explore additional issues related to falls overboard.

On Friday, the Forum moves into full swing. The Maine Lobster Association will hold its 63rd Annual Meeting with members at 9 a.m. The New England Fisheries Management Council (NEFMC) will host a public scoping hearing on its proposed Groundfish Monitoring Amendment. The amendment has generated much controversy among fishermen because it shifts the cost for on-board monitors from the National Marine Fisheries Service to the fishermen.

There will be a morning presentation on halibut management and science. Halibut is a seasonal fish in Maine, taking place typically in May and early June. Managers are concerned that halibut may be overfished and will be reviewing its management this year. The Council asked the DMR to review how it manages halibut. Representatives from DMR, the NEFMC, and the National Marine Fisheries Service will discuss possible management changes. In the afternoon, officials from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration will hold an open forum, taking questions from the audience about federal fisheries management.

Of particular interest to lobstermen will be the seminar on herring and lobster bait scheduled for Friday afternoon. This summer saw a crunch in herring supply which drove prices up and frustrated many lobstermen, particularly in small, hard-to-reach harbors where deliveries were infrequent. The DMR stepped in to ensure that herring, although limited in supply, remained available throughout the late summer and early fall. Now, the question is how to avoid a similar crisis next year if the herring once again prove scarce in Area 3. Representatives from DMR, the NEFMC, and the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission will discuss the upcoming season.

On Saturday the Maine Elver Fishermen’s Association will hold its annual meeting. Elvers remain a profitable fishery in the state, worth more than $11 million in value in 2015. The DMR instituted a swipe-card system for elver fishermen and dealers in 2016 which has allowed managers to track landings more efficiently. Currently fishermen are limited to 9,688 pounds in total; that quota is divided up among individual elver harvesters.

Also on Saturday the DMR and Council staff will present an overview of the Coral Amendment under development, including a review of potential closures proposed to protect deep-water corals in the Gulf of Maine. The NEFMC has crafted a management plan that identifies four areas in the near-shore Gulf of Maine for protection: Mount Desert Rock, Outer Schoodic Ridge, Jordan Basin and Lindenkohl Knoll. Maine lobstermen fish the first two areas; Massachusetts lobstermen frequent the second two. Written into the draft management plan are two regulatory options for these sites. The first would prohibit bottom-tending gears; the second would prohibit mobile bottom-tending gears. Maine lobstermen, particularly those from Downeast counties, want to ensure that lobster gear is exempted from any closures. Moderated by DMR external affairs director Terry Stockwell, this session is sure to be informative and lively.

The Alevie Harvester of Maine will hold its annual meeting on Saturday. Each spring alevies return to their lakes of origin to spawn. The seasonal run is a boon for lobstermen, who use the oily little fish as bait at a time when herring supply tends to be low. Very few states still have sustainable wild alevie runs, making management of this species of particular importance to biologists as well as lobstermen.

DMR science staff will speak about the state of Maine’s lobster stocks and present the preliminary 2016 landings figures in their annual lobster science update.
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“I was at the Fisherman’s Forum and learned more about what the MLA does in DC and Augusta. I thought, I need to do this.”
2017 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 1, 2017. Scholarships will be awarded by a random drawing to be held during the 42nd annual Maine Fishermen’s Forum. Please note that previous winners are not eligible.

You qualify for the scholarship drawing ONLY IF you checked all 4 items below.

Do you qualify? (Check all that apply)
1. ___ Are you a sophomore, junior, or senior right now? You must be at least a sophomore in college to apply.
2. ___ Do you have an immediate family member actively participating in Maine’s seafood industry?

What do you need to apply? (Check all that apply)
3. ___ Complete this application & send to the address at the top.
4. ___ Provide an official transcript or Registrar’s letter of current standing along with application.

Do you qualify? (Check all that apply)
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What do you need to apply? (Check all that apply)
3. ___ Complete this application & send to the address at the top.
4. ___ Provide an official transcript or Registrar’s letter of current standing along with application.

STUDENT INFORMATION
Student Name____________________________________________________
Street/Mailing Address_____________________________________________
City____________________________________________________________
State________ Zip____________ Home Phone_________________________
Email___________________________________________________________

SCHOOL INFORMATION
College/University name____________________________________________
Location of college_________________________________________________
Expected year of graduation_______ your major__________________________
**School standing as of Sept 2016 (circle one)
Freshman Sophomore Junior Senior

MAINE SEAFOOD INDUSTRY FAMILY MEMBER INFORMATION
Name_________________________________________________________ Relationship________________________________________________________
Street/Mailing Address___________________________________________ Home Phone_________________________
City_________________________ State______ Zip________ Email___________________________________________________
Vessel Name or Commercial License Number_______________________________
Describe Participation in the Maine seafood industry________________________

Why buy secondhand? Buy fresh, buy direct!
Cod continued from page 1

stermen and a sigh of discontent from groundfishermen. The problem with the estimate, as Department of Marine Resources Commissioner Patrick Keliher stated at the time, was that it didn’t take into account different parts of the coast, different depths, and different seasons of fishing; instead it more or less just scaled up a small amount of offshore data.

I came to the University of Maine in 2014, to begin a project looking into the fate of cod bycatch in the Maine lobster fishery. The late Captain Cappy Sargent of Milbridge took me aboard his boat to get a feel for what lobster fishing was like. Before I was a fish scientist, I was a commercial fisherman, having spent nine summers fishing for sockeye salmon in Alaska’s Bristol Bay and one year fishing for Dungeness crab near my hometown on Whidbey Island, Washington.

Soon, other lobstermen took my lab mate Jocelyn Runnebaum and myself aboard their boats and were kind enough to let us run a cod and cusk discard survey. In reality, the truth is likely a bit of both. Many types of bait are fished in different seasons and parts of the coast, but among the most common is herring, which happens to be one of the most energy-rich foods for cod. We saw a wide range of cod sizes in our study, but most were around 18 inches, which is the perceived shelter (lobster traps are nice looking houses to a fish), or food supply. In reality, the truth is likely a bit of both. Many types of bait are fished in different seasons and parts of the coast, but among the most common is herring, which happens to be one of the most energy-rich foods for cod. We saw a wide range of cod sizes in our study, but most were around 18 inches, which is the

... our results are encouraging and suggest that if cod are handled properly, a large proportion of them may be able to survive.

Some fish undergo the reverse of what divers call “the bends” when coming from depth rapidly. It works out that for every five fathoms in depth, pressure is one atmosphere greater (for reference, pressure is roughly one atmosphere unless you are underwater or on top of Mt. Katahdin). We were testing the idea that if we could recompress the cod as a trap sinks back down, we might be able to reverse the barotrauma. We attached a GoPro camera and an LED light inside a trap. When a cod came up in a lobsterman’s trap, we would tag it, take measurements, evaluate its health, then put it in our rigged trap, throw it back, and wait. We hypothesized that the reason cod swim into the trap either had to do with perceived shelter (lobster traps are nice looking houses to a fish), or food supply. In reality, the truth is likely a bit of both. Many types of bait are fished in different seasons and parts of the coast, but among the most common is herring, which happens to be one of the most energy-rich foods for cod. We saw a wide range of cod sizes in our study, but most were around 18 inches, which is the size at which they shift from eating invertebrates to mainly fish prey.

Overall what we found is that most cod don’t show severe signs of external barotrauma (i.e. stomach sticking out the mouth, bugged out eyes, or skin bubbles). Only about 10% of cod hauled initially were dead, and these were mostly due to hungry lobsters in the trap. Of those remaining, most of the cod looked vibrant and swam around the video trap when recompressed. The GoPro footage suggested cod could be recompressed and swim around inside the trap, but could not find their way out of the trap over the few hours when the GoPro operated.

I released some of the cod at the surface, and most could swim down. However, with this method we don’t know a lot about what happens to cod internally after they are surface-released. That being said, our results are encouraging and suggest that if cod are handled properly, a large proportion of them may be able to survive. This will be important if management decisions down the line include cod as a bycatch in the lobster fishery. Often managers make an assumption of 100% mortality, so any reduction in estimated mortality rate would be advantageous. The Maine lobster fishery is one of the cleanest fisheries (in terms of bycatch) around and it is no accident that it has a reputation for marine stewardship.

ARTIFACTS ILLUSTRATE LONG LOBSTERING HISTORY

Fishermen have been catching lobsters commercially in Maine for more than a century. The tools of the fishery have changed over the decades — from sail-powered wooden vessels to today’s high-tech fiberglass boats, from traps made with wooden lathes to vinyl-coated wire traps made in a factory. The Maine lobster fishery is full of tradition, despite the changes that have occurred over the decades. This month Landings begins a new feature on those items from long ago. We start with an image sent to us from the Maine Maritime Museum in Bath, whose exhibit, Lobstering & the Maine Coast, opened in 2015.

If you have a photo of lobstering gear from long ago, you may send it to Melissa Waterman, melissa@mainelobstermen.org.

MEET THE MLA AT THE FORUM

Come visit the MLA booth at the Maine Fishermen’s Forum from March 2 to 4.

And don’t forget to attend the 63rd MLA Annual Meeting on March 3! Learn more about the 2017 plans of the state’s oldest fishermen’s organization.
lobster band for display. “The lobster bands are made in different widths, so all the result was a sturdy sterling silver band with edge ridges that can hold a Maine College of Art where she specialized in metalsmithing, did just that and bands’ and I thought why not go a step further and actually make a ring where the bands could be worn?” Curry said. Curry, who has a BFA degree from Maine College of Art where she specialized in metal smithing, got her bands from local lobster co-ops, but ring owners may also collect their with or without a lobster band. Each ring purchased comes in a clean bait bag with four new, different-color lobster bands to interchange as you wish. Curry may not fit on your ring — but they can easily be trimmed to size with sharp scissors if needed.” Curry said.

All rings are all stamped with the word “Maine” on the outside and may be worn with or without a lobster band. Each ring purchased comes in a clean bait bag with four new, different-color lobster bands to interchange as you wish. Curry gets her bands from local lobster co-ops, but ring owners may also collect their own, or purchase other band colors or bands that are custom-stamped with messages, or use recycled bands from live lobsters. Some people like to collect different bands from various fishermen friends.

“The LobsterBand rings are sturdy, versatile and fun and a unique conversation piece and reminder of Maine,” Curry said. Since she began marketing these particular rings three years ago, the 36-year-old designer, who currently has six other jewelry lines, said the rings have become popular among both men and women and fishermen and non-fishermen as well. It appears the rings have a universal appeal, as Curry has sold her rings to people from all over the world. And though she is not sure if any of her rings have been used as actual wedding bands, the possibility is certainly there.

The sterling silver LobsterBand rings may be purchased directly through Curry’s website www.lobsterbandrings.com and are also available at selected stores across the state. Evan Griffith, 29, grew up in South Portland. The youngest of three brothers, he spent his first years out of school as a golf professional, but decided to give up the clubs four years ago. He began to make lobster gauge cuff bracelets and hasn’t looked back since.

“My biggest focus and area of expertise in golf was building golf clubs. That’s where I picked up some of the skills I use making jewelry,” Griffith said. Griffith’s interest in the uniqueness of lobster gauge cuff was piqued when a friend introduced him to the concept and suggested he could easily do it because of his experience and the skills he had honed building golf clubs.

“I thought it was really neat and wanted to try make one. I had never made jewelry or anything really like it before, but I saw the potential for what it could be beyond just the original polished brass design that others had made,” Griffith said.

“The first two cuffs I made were a polished brass and a torched stain- less [steel] lobster gauge cuff. I knew from working on golf clubs that heating stainless steel brought out a wide range of colors, deep blues and purples as well as gold and green depending on the temperature used. From there I came up with the weathered brass patina which simulates brass being left out in the open air. This season I added what I call a ‘sea spray’ patina which uses salt to mimic the patina that brass patina which simulates brass being left out in the open air. This season I added what I call a ‘sea spray’ patina which uses salt to mimic the patina that brass tools get when used in a marine environment.”

Every step in the bracelet-making process is done by Griffith himself — from the shaping, bending and stamping to the final patina effect and polishing. The complete process takes him about 36 hours to complete. The cuffs sell through his online studio store. He has created another variation of the cuff bracelet which he calls the mariner line. “Customers can have coordinates engraved on the inside of their lobster gauge cuffs. I love that the coordinates themselves are a great conversation starter, as well as having the ability to have each cuff be unique to each customer,” Griffith said.

His cuffs appeal to both men and women and young and old alike. “I’ve sold to just about everyone, of all ages, from those who are local and in some way involved in the fishing industry to people as far away as California who love the concept and story behind the intended use of the original form,” Griffith said.

Since he officially started the business in the spring of 2015, sales have been brisk. “I’ve sold somewhere around 750 bracelets, which is amazing to me. I never really thought I’d love it as much as I do or have the ability to make it my full-time job when I started.”

“I’m working on prototypes now for the spring/summer season,” Griffith explained. “I have some designs I’ve been thinking about for a while now and it’s just a matter of seeing what is feasible. I’m also working on products for the home. I’ve been designing lamps and home interior designs for about a year now and I’m about ready to add those to the list of things I make for Lighthouse Studio Design (www.lighthousedestudiodesign.com). My goal is to keep thinking of and making new ideas and see how far I can take the business.”
Welcome to February! If you missed the open enrollment period for ACA health insurance, which closed on January 31, you will have to wait until November of this year to enroll in a plan for 2018. There are a few exceptions, typically the result of a significant life event.

After the open enrollment period ends, consumers still have the opportunity to enroll in qualified health plans if they experience certain life changes, such as marriage or a permanent move to an area with new coverage options. These opportunities outside of open enrollment are called special enrollment periods, or SEPs.

A qualifying event can occur at any point during the year. The ability to enroll in a health insurance plan through a SEP lasts 60 days from the date of the qualifying event.

A SEP can be something that occurs in one of the following six categories:

1. Loss of qualifying health coverage: if you (or anyone in your household for whom they seek coverage) lose qualifying health coverage. Some examples of qualifying health coverage include:
   - Coverage through a job, or through another person's job
   - Medicaid or Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) coverage (including pregnancy-related coverage and medically needy coverage)
   - Medicare
   - Individual or group health plan coverage that ends during the year
   - Dependent coverage that a consumer has through a parent's plan. If you turn 26 or the maximum dependent age allowed in your state and lose coverage, you can qualify for an SEP.

2. Change in household size: a consumer may qualify for an SEP if you (or anyone in your household):
   - Got married
   - Had a baby, adopted a child, or placed a child for foster care
   - Got divorced, legally separated, or had a death in the family and lost health coverage
   - Gained or became a dependent due to a child support or other court order

3. Change in primary place of living: if you (or anyone in your household) has a change in your primary place of living, such as:
   - Moving to a new home in a new zip code or county where new qualified health plans are available
   - Moving to the U.S. from a foreign country or United States territory
   - A student moving to or from the place he or she attends school
   - A seasonal worker moving to or from the place he or she lives and works

4. Change in eligibility for Marketplace coverage or help paying for coverage. If you (or anyone in your household) is enrolled in Marketplace coverage and reports a change that makes the consumer:
   - Newly eligible for help paying for coverage
   - Ineligible for help paying for coverage
   - Eligible for a different amount of help paying out-of-pocket costs

Many changes in circumstance or life events can trigger SEPs, but you should understand that not all changes will allow you to enroll in or change plans. Some changes that do not trigger an SEP include:

- Loss of minimum essential coverage due to failure of payments
- Voluntary COBRA cancelation
- Pregnancy (a birth, however, will lead to an SEP)
- Income changes, unless a consumer is currently enrolled in a qualified health plan or their income rose above the 100% Federal Poverty Line
- Loss of coverage for more than 60 days.

If you think you qualify for a SEP and want help with your health insurance options, please call me at 207-967-4555 or send an email to alisha@mainelobstermen.org.
stated that the fishery management council could identify and implement measures that reduce, to the extent practicable, impacts of fishing gear on deep-sea corals in New England.

In the meantime, environmental organizations began lobbying Congress and the Obama administration to establish a National Marine Monument in offshore waters, specifically those submarine canyons and seamounts located south of Georges Bank. Despite opposition from most fishing organizations in New England, President Obama created the Northeast Canyons and Seamounts National Marine Monument in September, 2016, the first U.S. monument located in the Atlantic Ocean. The 4,913-square-mile area, which includes three deep-sea canyons and four underwater mountains, is now off limits to commercial fishing (red crab and lobster fishing must end within six years) and other commercial uses.

The Council entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Mid-Atlantic Fisheries Management Council in 2013. The regulatory authority of the two councils overlapped along the continental slope where coral conservation efforts had been found. The Mid-Atlantic Council chose to pursue coral protection by amending its existing Mackerel, Squid, and Butterfish Fisheries Management Plan. Amendment 16 to that plan was approved in June, 2015. The plan prohibits fishing activity in areas deeper than 450 meters. It also exempts lobster gear from commercial fishing prohibitions, in part because lobstermen know that there is strong opposition to the alternative proposing that lobster/crab gear be prohibited in those two areas, noted DMR external affairs director Terry Stockwell in an email.

The financial hardships posed by the coral protection amendment also might influence the Council’s final decision. The Magnuson-Stevens Act specifically requires the Council to consider the economic impact of its regulations. “We’re seeking input on how closures of specific coral management areas would affect businesses, ports, and communities, and we’d like to know if there are ways to modify the boundaries of the areas to limit any negative effects,” Michelle Bachman, the Council’s lead habitat analyst, said.

The draft amendment and its range of alternatives will go out to public hearing awaiting its passage to Congress and the Obama administration to establish a National Marine Monument in offshore waters, specifically those submarine canyons and seamounts located south of Georges Bank. Despite opposition from most fishing organizations in New England, President Obama created the Northeast Canyons and Seamounts National Marine Monument in September, 2016, the first U.S. monument located in the Atlantic Ocean. The 4,913-square-mile area, which includes three deep-sea canyons and four underwater mountains, is now off limits to commercial fishing (red crab and lobster fishing must end within six years) and other commercial uses.

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The draft amendment and its range of alternatives will go out to public hearings in the spring before the Council takes a final vote, which could happen as early as June.

“We welcome industry involvement,” said Bachman. “We’re trying to balance coral conservation with fishery access, and to do this, we need to understand how fishing activity is distributed with respect to coral habitats.” For example, she explained, information about depth and bottom type where gear is typically set would help the Council evaluate the likelihood of fishing gear interactions with coral.

There will be a session on Saturday, March 4, at 9 a.m. during the Maine Fishermen’s Forum to provide interested fishermen with more information about this process and the proposals under consideration. There are several ways fishermen can provide feedback or information to the Council:

- Send a letter, which will be reviewed at the next available Habitat Committee or Council meeting.
- Attend a Habitat Committee or Council meeting in person and provide comments.
- Attend a public hearing. These will be scheduled in the spring of 2017 after the Council has had the opportunity to review the entire draft amendment and analyses and to identify preferred approaches. Public hearings are especially important because they’re solely focused on getting industry feedback on the proposals.
- Sign up to receive habitat-related alerts via email using this link: https://www.nefmc.org/subscribe.
- Visit the Council website regularly at www.nefmc.org to keep tabs on all meeting dates, locations, and related documents. And finally,
- Call or email Michelle Bachman at 978-465-0492, extension 120, mbachman@nefmc.org. She’s available to answer questions about the alternatives, impacts analysis, or the amendment development process.

**Garbo Lobster**

*We put our name on it*

**Garbo depends on the hard work and stewardship of Maine lobstermen.**

**Thank you!**

127 Pound Rd • PO Box 334 • Hancock, Maine 04640 207-422-3217 • peted@garbolobster.com
SCHOOL OF THE OCEAN TAKES SHAPE IN SEARSPORT

Maine offers many possibilities for those who want to pursue a career linked to the sea. We look at a new high school that makes the ocean the center of the classroom in this article, the next in our series on marine educational opportunities in Maine.

By Melissa Waterman

If all goes well, within the next two years a new high school will open in Searsport. But not any old high school. The Maine Ocean School (MOS) would be the state’s second magnet school, after Limestone School of Science and Mathematics, which opened in 1995. It would be a school whose entire focus is on the ocean.

In 2015, Rep. James Gillway, also Searsport’s town manager, introduced a bill in the Legislature to create the Maine Ocean School. The bill, which allocated no money for the new school, became law as one of a group of bills that Governor Paul LePage had intended to veto but did not do so in time.

In Maine, a magnet school is a public school offering special instruction and programs not available elsewhere, designed to attract a more diverse student body from throughout the state. The majority of magnet school students live at the school.

After the bill chartering the school passed, a group of individuals from marine-related fields began to meet and formed itself into a board to build the foundations for the new high school. They had a deadline: by February, 2017, the group would have to deliver an organizational report to the Maine State Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs. “The board must provide a plan for the school, the most significant part of which is the draft curriculum,” explained Gayle Zydlewski, program committee chair. “If the result is positive, we can set a budget for the school based on the plan.”

According to the MOS web site, the Maine Ocean School’s mission “is to provide a theme-based high school education focused on Maine’s maritime connection, with an emphasis on leadership, work ethic, and the transferrable skills associated with careers involving the ocean.”

As a public school, the MOS curriculum must meet state standards in eight specific content areas: Career and Education Development, English Language Arts, Health and Physical Education, Mathematics, Science and Technology, Social Studies, Visual and Performing Arts, and World Languages. Each content area will be taught with an eye toward its connection to the marine world. So, for instance, English classes will include literature of the sea. Social studies would involve marine policy or law.

“But what makes the ocean science school unique will be the four different tracks that students can choose from at school,” Zydlewski said. These four tracks — marine science, marine transportation, marine engineering, and marine management — are designed to introduce students to the many careers available in these areas. When a freshman enters the MOS, he or she will get to sample classes and opportunities in all four areas. By the junior year, the student is expected to concentrate in one area to prepare for future studies. “For example, someone who chooses a track in the marine transportation track might decide to go on to higher education or perhaps work as a pilot,” Zydlewski said. “We hope that they will either have their Marine Mariner credentials or be ready to get them. Marine engineering could lead to work in structural engineering or someone could pursue a career as a ship’s engineer.”

Many individuals have been eager to volunteer their time and expertise to the fledging school, Zydlewski continued. The MOS board has set up a separate 501 (c) 3 charitable organization to receive grants and donations. If the Joint Committee approves the MOS report, the proposal will go to the Legislature for budget appropriation as a public school. “People have been coming out of the woodwork to make this curriculum happen. If we meet with the committee’s approval, then the next step is to hire an executive director and to start summer programming for students,” she said.

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WISHES MAINE LOBSTERMEN A GREAT 2017 SEASON!

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Date. The presentation will include the results of the department’s monitoring programs, specifically the sea sampling, ventless trap survey, inshore trawl survey, and settlement survey. University of Maine researchers will talk about the Rapid Resource Program, a new resource for industry. One issue sure to be covered is the decline during the past three years in juvenile lobster settlement along the coast.

Dr. Jean Lavallée, a lobster veterinarian and the region’s leading lobster health expert, will present a workshop entitled “Avoid a Crustacean Crisis” Saturday afternoon chronicling a lobster’s journey from the comfort of the ocean floor to a processing plant or holding facility. A lobster’s physiology makes it surprisingly prone to stress and injury. In addition, environmental factors such as diet, water temperatures and molt cycle can affect its health. Handling practices and the holding environment can put stress on the animal. Lavallée will explain how minimizing stress and injury to lobsters will produce a healthier lobster and more profits.

On Saturday afternoon the Maine Lobster Marketing Collaborative’s (MLMC) executive director Matt Jacobson will host a review of the Collaborative’s efforts in 2016. The MLMC was established in 2013 by the Maine Legislature and is funded by a surcharge on lobsters and seafood processors’ licenses. Since its inception, the MLMC has worked with the marketing firm Weber Shandwick to boost demand for Maine lobster among East Coast chefs and food professionals. Its “Maine after Midnight” events in major cities last summer brought Maine lobstermen face-to-face with leading chefs, helping to educate those professionals on the versatility of Maine lobster.

And, as always, the Fishermen’s Forum will be packed with exhibitors featuring products and services of interest to fishermen. The Forum’s social calendar will include the popular seafood reception and silent auction to benefit theannual Scholarship Fund. Friday night will feature a seafood dinner and live auction, also to benefit the Scholarship Fund, which always makes for a fun and energetic evening. The scholarship awards will be given on Saturday night at the traditional evening banquet and dance. That night also features the annual Golden V-notch award, the DMR Officer of the Year award, and other recognitions. For more information on the Maine Fishermen’s Forum, visit www.mainefishermenforum.org.
lobster zone and that does not have trap limits and exit ratios consistent with the license holders declared zone;
4) if a lobsterman fishes traps outside the declared lobster zone, the lobsterman is limited to the most restrictive management measures of both zones; and
5) Require the DMR Commissioner to annually review the rules regarding the number of second zone tags that have been fished in each limited entry zone and allow the Commissioner to propose rule changes to ensure parity of zone access and stability of zone effort related to double tagging.

LD 201 An Act to Provide Flexibility in the Purchase of Lobster Trap Tags, sponsored by Rep. Kumiega of Deer Isle
This bill proposes to allow a lobsterman to purchase up to the maximum number of trap tags purchased under that license in any previous year.

LR 1746 An Act to Address Marine Debris Resulting for Commercial Activities, sponsored by Rep. Devin of Newcastle. This is a concept bill to address marine debris resulting from commercial fishing and aquaculture lease sites.

LR 956 An Act Regarding Legal Lobster Haul Times outside the 3-mile Line, sponsored by Rep. Tuell of East Machias. This bill is a concept draft to allow Zone A lobstermen to haul gear without any time of day restrictions in federal waters (outside 3 miles).

LR 1561 An Act to Improve Enforcement of Maine’s Lobster Laws, sponsored by Sen. Langley of Hancock
This is a concept draft which proposed to enact measures to improve the enforcement of Maine’s lobster conservation laws and ensure the long-term sustainability of the lobster resource. These measures may include establishing minimum penalties such as license suspension to deter violations such as scrubbing egged lobster, fishing over the trap limit, fishing sunken trawls or untagged gear and molesting lobster traps establish minimum penalties of monetary fines to deter violations such as keeping short, over-sized, v-notched or egg-bearing females and higher minimum penalties for repeat offenders. The bill also proposes to give the Commissioner of Marine Resources the authority to suspend marine resources licenses of those found guilty of sinking, burning or otherwise destroying another fisherman’s vessel and establish a minimum penalty of a permanent suspension of marine resource licenses for this offense. It also proposes to require lobster license holders found guilty of violating marine conservation laws to pay restitution equal to the cost incurred by the state to conduct the investigation; and require lobster license holders convicted of marine resource violation(s) resulting in a license suspension who re-enter the lobster fishery to re-enter as a new entrant limited to 300 traps and allowed to build up at a rate of 100 traps per year up to the zone limit; and to have a vessel monitoring system aboard the vessel.

LR 411 An Act to Ensure Consistent Access to Limited Entry Lobster Zones, sponsored by Rep. Hubbell of Bar Harbor. This bill proposes to limit the ability to fish lobster traps outside the declared lobster zone with second zone tags to existing license holders only. New entrants to the lobster fishery would be prohibited from fishing lobster gear outside the declared lobster zone.

LR 1184 An Act to Give the Department of Marine Resources Flexibility with Licensing in the Herring Fishery, sponsored by Rep. Parry of Arundel. This bill proposes to give the Commissioner of Marine Resources the authority to manage herring fishermen depending on how recently they have had landings in Maine. This bill would enable Maine to comply with potential changes to the herring management plan through the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission.

LR 1743 An Act to Incentivize Private Investment of Lobster Processing in Maine, sponsored by Sen. Carson of Cumberland
TRADE AGREEMENTS CAUSE UNCERTAINTY AMONG SEAFOOD PRODUCERS

President Donald Trump signed an executive order that officially withdrew the United States from the Trans Pacific Partnership Trade Agreement in January. “This is a lost opportunity for exporters and importers to make the global seafood trade market a more predictable place,” said Gavin Gibbons, vice president of communications for the National Fisheries Institute (NFI). The move signaled that the President would also be likely to renegotiate the terms of the North American Free Trade Agreement, signed by President Clinton in 1992. That action would in turn affect seafood trade between the U.S. and Canada and Mexico.

THEY’RE BACK!

Two North Atlantic right whales were spotted in Cape Cod Bay in late January, five miles south of the Provincetown harbor. Two days later whale observers spotted five right whales in approximately the same location. Right whales enter Cape Cod Bay every winter, drawn to the area by high concentrations of microscopic zooplankton upon which they feed. The whales gather in large groups throughout the winter months before dispersing into the Gulf of Maine in the summer.

MARINE INSTITUTE TO EXPAND THIS SUMMER

The University of Maine announced in January that it would begin a $5 million expansion this summer of the Downeast Institute, an applied marine research and education facility located in Beals. The project will include 8,500 square feet of added laboratory space, along with mechanical, electrical and plumbing upgrades, short-term housing for visiting scientists and students, a small visitors center and office space. The expansion will allow more researchers to pursue projects in the eastern Gulf of Maine. It also will increase opportunities for University of Maine at Machias students and others in the state university system to get practical research experience as they pursue their degrees.

SWEDEN PLANS ANOTHER TRY AT LIMITING LOBSTER IMPORTS

Officials in Sweden are preparing a new proposal to deal with American lobsters that have turned up in Swedish waters. Sweden had wanted the European Union to consider a ban on imports of American lobsters as an invasive species after 32 American lobsters were found along its coast. EU officials turned down the request in October after U.S. and Canadian scientists and politicians raised concerns about a lack of evidence for such a uniform ban. The new proposal intends to address the presence of American lobsters with countrywide and regional measures as opposed to an international ban.

NOVA SCOTIA BENEFITING FROM FREE TRADE

On January 1, tariffs were reduced on Canadian seafood by China’s ministry of commerce benefiting a quarter of Canada’s seafood exports to China. Nova Scotia exports more seafood than any other Canadian province. Through October 2016, it had exported $218 million worth to the Asian country. In addition, Nova Scotia will benefit from the proposed EU-Canada free trade deal, which will permanently eliminate almost all tariffs on seafood going into Europe. Europe still remains at the moment a larger market for Nova Scotia than China. Upon ratification, the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) would immediately eliminate the tariff on live lobster, which now is 8%. Under CETA, all additional seafood tariffs would be phased out in seven years.

PENOBSCOT EAST RESOURCE CENTER DIRECTOR WILL STEP DOWN

Robin Alden, executive director of a progressive Downeast fisheries research and advocacy center, will step down at the end of the year, as part of a planned transition. The Stonington resident co-founded the Penobscot East Resource Center 13 years ago with her husband Ted Ames, and Ted Hoskins and Kristen and Paul Lewis.

Alden is the long-time editor and publisher of Commercial Fisheries News, and has served as commissioner of the Maine Department of Marine Resources. The Ellsworth American reported that Alden’s decision to retire from PERC is part of what the organization called, “a carefully planned five-year process.” Penobscot East operates educational, scientific and environmental research and advocacy programs for fishermen and fisher-ies and also coordinates the Eastern Maine Skippers Program for high school students interested in commercial fishing. Alden’s work was recently recognized by both the Peter Benchley Ocean Awards and by the White House.

Affordable Care Act health insurance remains in place for now

President Trump issued an executive order in January that instructs federal agencies to use their existing powers to weaken the Affordable Care Act “to the maximum extent permitted by law.” While the order is sending tremors throughout the health insurance market, alarming health care providers and consumers alike, it’s important to note what it does not do:

• On its own the order cannot dismantle the Affordable Care Act.
• The order does not change people’s ability to enroll in coverage and get subsidies for 2017 health plans. Current efforts to encourage people to enroll in Marketplace coverage should continue and people should continue to sign up.

What the executive order does do is signal the Trump administration’s intent to begin dismantling the ACA. With this order, Trump assumes responsibility for what comes next as his massive changes to America’s health care system jeopardize the coverage and protections for millions. While the full impact of this executive order has yet to be seen, it is important for consumers to still enroll in coverage.
Maine Lobster Leadership Program kickoff, February 2-3

Where can you find cuttlefish from Spain, mahi-mahi from Taiwan, lobster from Maine, tuna from China and more than 20,000 seafood buyers, sellers and processors in one place? At the Seafood Expo North America, formerly the Boston Seafood Show in Boston. The Expo is the largest seafood trade event in North America, with more than 1,000 exhibitors attending from around the world. "Sustaining Remote Places: The Business of Marine Renewable Energy," talk by ORPC president Chris Sauer, 7 p.m., Gulf of Maine Research Institute, Portland. FMI: 228-1699

February 13

Public Comment deadline for DMR proposed rules for exit ratios for zones B, C and E; Hancock County trawl limits and zone transfer list. Send comments to Sarah Cotnoir, DMR, 21 State House Station, Augusta, ME 04333 or sarah.cotnoir@maine.gov. FMI: 207-624-6596

February 9

Atlantic Scientific Review Group, University of Maine, during the Maine Sea Grant/NEFMC Herring Committee meeting, 9 a.m., Samoset Resort, Rockport.

Atlantic Ocean Science Foundation's 42nd Annual Maine Fishermen's Forum, Samoset Resort, Rockport.

Maine Lobstermen's Association 63rd Annual Meeting, 9 a.m., Samoset Resort, Rockport.

Maine Maritime Museum 6th Annual Voices of the Sea music and poetry event, 7 p.m., Bull Feeney’s, Portland. Tickets and info at www/Mainemaritime.org.

Seafood Expo North America, Boston, MA. March 19-21

Maine Lobstermen’s Association day trip to Seafood Expo North America, Boston. FMI: 967-4555.

February 7

FISHERMEN INVITED TO SEAFOOD EXPO NORTH AMERICA

By MLA Staff

Where can you find cuttlefish from Spain, mahi-mahi from Taiwan, lobster from Maine, tuna from China and more than 20,000 seafood buyers, sellers and processors in one place? At the Seafood Expo North America (formerly the Boston Seafood Show) in Boston, that’s where. The Expo is the largest seafood trade event in North America, with more than 1,000 exhibitors attending from around the world. This year’s show takes place from March 19 to 21.

On Monday, March 20, the Maine Lobstermen’s Association (MLA) will offer a one-day trip to the Expo on a chartered bus. The bus departs from Bangor and stops in Augusta, Portland, and Kennebunk to pick up participants before heading to Boston. The cost is $50 for MLA members and $60 for non-members and includes entrance to the show.

“We offered this trip last year because it is important that our members see just how massive the global seafood market is,” said Patrice McCarron, MLA executive director. “Lobstermen can see for themselves the high regard given to their lobster and learn more about how seafood products move around the world.”

Come to the Seafood Show!

Bus leaves from:
Bangor at 6 a.m.
Augusta: 7:30 a.m. from the Augusta Civic Center, 76 Community Drive
Portland: 8:30 a.m. from the Marginal Way Park and Ride (across from Golds Gym)
Kennebunk: 9:15 a.m. from the Park and Ride (off Rt 35 across from Spurling Training Center)

Arrive in Boston about 10:45/11 a.m.
Return to bus 4:45 p.m. Depart Boston 5 p.m. – stop in Kennebunk, Portland, Augusta and final stop in Bangor estimated 10 p.m.

Reservations must be made prior to February 27th and can be made online at www.mainelobstermen.org/projects or by calling or emailing Andi at 207-967-4555 or andi@mainelobstermen.org.

February 3-23

MLA Directors meeting, noon, Darby’s in Bangor. FMI: 967-4555.

February 7-9

MLA day trip to Seafood Expo North America, Portland. FMI: 228-1699

February 7-9


February 7

MLA Directors meeting, 9 a.m., Sheraton Portland Maine, Portland. FMI: 207-967-4555 or andi@mainelobstermen.org.

February 2-3

MLA Directors meeting, noon, Darby’s in Bangor. FMI: 967-4555.

February 2


February 1

MLA Directors meeting, noon, Darby’s in Bangor. FMI: 967-4555.

February 1


February 1

Maine Lobster Marketing Collaborative meeting, 1 p.m, Island Institute, Rockland.

February 1

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Maine Lobster Marketing Collaborative meeting, 1 p.m., Island Institute, Rockland.

February 1

The Maine Maritime Museum is looking for musician or poet fishermen performers for our 6th Annual Voices of the Sea event. If you know someone who sings or writes about their work on the water and would like to help keep this tradition alive, please contact Jonathan at wells@maritimemem.org or (207)443-1316 x325
RAISING A SUNKEN BOAT IS TOUGH WORK IN THE WINTER

By Melissa Waterman

Maurice (Mort) Morgan of Cundy’s Harbor set out on a Saturday morning in January to take some of his lobster traps out of the water. Before he reached the harbor, however, he received the call that lobstermen dread: the Silvia Maria, his 38-foot Duffy, had sunk in 30 feet of water. “I never thought it would happen to me,” he said.

Morgan took all the right steps. He called the Coast Guard to let them know that his federally-documented vessel was sunk. He informed local officials that no oil had leaked from the boat. He called his insurance company to tell them of his situation. And then he tried to raise his boat. “Four other boats came together and we tried to get her off the bottom,” Morgan said. “It was a freezing day.” A diver was sent down to get straps under the hull; the other vessels took lines through their haulers and began to slowly bring the boat out of the mud. Then the lines broke. “She went down again. There was an air pocket in the cabin, burst the windows out,” Morgan said.

Morgan called Sea Tow Inc. to raise the Silvia Maria. Sea Tow is a private company that provides on-the-water assistance to mariners. Bruce White is in charge of the Sea Tow district from Goose Rocks Beach to Pemaquid Point.

The day after the sinking was too windy to attempt the salvage so the boat sat on the bottom for a total three days. “First thing we do is send a diver down to get the boat off the bottom,” White explained. The company uses air bags that when inflated can exert between 2,000 to 4,000 pounds of pressure. Once the boat is free from the seabed, additional air bags are secured around the hull to keep the boat upright as she’s raised. “A boat is very uncontrollable when it’s awash. It’s easy to roll over. When it leans just a bit to one side you can lose control.” The trick is to raise the boat very, very slowly. The delicate task was compounded by the cold day; temperatures never rose above 16°F. “The air valves and manifolds kept freezing up. We had to use [one of the local lobster boat’s] hot tank to free things.”

“It took all day. They did an excellent job,” Morgan said. Once the boat was pumped dry, Morgan had her towed to Bethel Point to Finest Kind boatyard. Everything ruined by salt water was removed. “The electronics are about $15,000. The engine and transmission, that’s $45 to $48,000. I have some insurance but I don’t know if it’s enough,” Morgan said.