

FISHTOWN PRESERVATION

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Assuring public access to Fishtown and maintaining its historical integrity, working waterfront, and stories through preservation, education, and stewardship.



“Fishtown—this place—is the deep-driven piling to our stories, and to its foundation we can tie the lines that connect us to family, to friends and to each other. To what we call community.” *—Amanda Holmes*



The commercial fishing vessel *Joy* at the dock on the Leland River, August 2017, is a daily reminder that commercial fishing has been the life-thread of Fishtown from the very beginning—dating to before 1850. PHOTO BY AMANDA HOLMES

THIS PLACE WE LOVE

By Amanda Holmes, FPS Executive Director

The snow was falling so hard I could barely make out the shanty rooflines on the horizon. From where I stood, at the intersection of West River and Lake Streets, the Manitou Passage and its islands had disappeared.

I saw nobody else as I walked the snow-drifted docks, took in the names of the business signs hanging from the shanties, or ran my hands over the rust streaking the sides of the two steel boats named *Joy* and *Janice Sue*.

I had, like so many others before me, come to Fishtown to work. This was my first day of work, in fact: February 7, 2007, the day the purchase of much of Fishtown by Fishtown Preservation became final. I'd been hired as the organization's first (and for a while only) staffer—and frankly, I was terrified. What did I know about Fishtown, especially compared to the hundreds of others who had visited here for years or had worked here for decades, or whose families had summered here for generations? How could I do justice to the men and families who had fished these waters for so long that they spoke of commercial fishing as being “in their blood”?

I was confronting, in my own way, the same question many people have about Fishtown: Can we love a place so much that it becomes our own? Within days of starting my work I was studying old photographs and making appointments to talk with people whose names were not yet familiar to me—Steffens, Stallman, Buckler, Price, Duffy, Munoz—in search of clues about their lives, both past and present. Since then I have traced the journeys of many families that have had Fishtown at their center, sometimes for generations: fishing families and summer families, and families who come here for just a short glimpse each July. What they see is as different as the particulars of what they experience. Their love for Fishtown

takes different shapes, but all of them are deep.

Each story also anchors me deeper to this place; every story inspires me to want to learn more and to gather more. That's what makes Fishtown seem like a place of magic: It has been a witness. I've heard an almost countless number of stories, yet I know I have heard only the smallest fraction of them all. Fishtown—this place—is the deep-driven piling to our stories, and to its foundation we can tie the lines that connect us to family, to friends and to each other. To what we call community.

These stories are why Fishtown's importance reaches so far beyond Leland. What terrified me that first day was the breadth of the responsibilities before me and us, to ensure that Fishtown is here forever—not just for the work or the fishing or the summer recreation or the history, but for all of these reasons we know and the many we never will know. We see only a few of the pieces; put together, they make Fishtown a large place in the world.

In this issue of Fishtown Preservation are three stories about people in the midst of discovering Fishtown. They arrived looking for different things, and what they found was likewise different—but each of them found it in Fishtown. They discover that sometimes we choose our places, but sometimes the places choose us, too.

There is more to connections than time or lineage. Places become ours because of our love for them. Thank you for keeping Fishtown in your life and for doing what you can to **make sure Fishtown remains this tiny yet immeasurable place in the world.** ■

FISHTOWN ODYSSEY

By Daniel Stewart, Contributing Writer

“I’m sitting on the sands of Lake Michigan watching the sun set. Believe me it’s breathtaking—such color. The water becomes orange blue or a green—blue waves on the edge of the shoreline.” —Reinhold Marxhausen ~ June 24, 1948

Watercolor can seem the lightest of painting methods, with luminous pigments that often approach transparency. The colors and images sometimes seem barely to hold onto the paper beneath. The paradox is that painting in watercolor takes courage and confidence, and many painters consider it the most formidable medium. “With watercolors,” says Karl Marxhausen, a visual artist and writer living in Missouri, “it can go bad really fast, and then there’s just no way to fix it.” Karl’s connection, in fact, is nearly 70 years old, and was until recently entirely unknown to him.



Reinhold Marxhausen in 1977 with a “Flurry” paper sculpture, happened upon the Michigan State University Leland Summer Art School in June 1948, and was inspired by Fishtown.

PHOTO COURTESY OF LINCOLN JOURNAL STAR

In June 1948, Reinhold Marxhausen, a student at Valparaiso University in northern Indiana, decided to use the break from school to travel to see an aunt and uncle in Owosso, Michigan, not far from Lansing. He didn’t intend to travel directly, however, but in an arc around the Lower Peninsula, up the Lake Michigan shoreline and then across to see a “Valpo” classmate in Saginaw. He was going to paint along the way—watercolors.

He didn’t dawdle on the trip, spending no more than a single night in the towns he passed through—Saugatuck, Holland, Muskegon. He painted when it didn’t rain,

and when he had the time. He was hitchhiking, which at its best is serendipity, at its worst a laborious trek to country-road crossroads with his bags and art supplies tugging heavily at his shoulders. In Manistee he met Joe Trevitts, who’d trained at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts in Philadelphia, fought in France in the Great War, and then studied art in Paris afterward—something like Reinhold himself, who’d served in the Pacific in World War II. Trevitts hung his paintings of sand dunes on the walls of his small-town grocery store. “Very good work indeed,” Reinhold commented.

A succession of fruit sellers carried him to Frankfort and then to Glen Arbor. On the evening of June 24 he stepped out of car in a “quaint fishing village” of 300 people called Leland. He was, though, after only a few days, feeling the isolation. On the second day of the journey he wrote, “The walk I took this afternoon was wonderful, but I enjoy things more if I have some one else with me. I’ve talked so little since I left Valpo I hardly know what my voice sounds like.” He found a place to stay on Leland’s Main Street for \$1.25 for the night. “This big apt. sure looks lonesome tonight,” he wrote.

However, the next day, for the first time on his trip, he didn’t pull up stakes and move on, nor did he the day after that. He’d found something in Leland—something he didn’t realize he’d hinted at on that first tired, lonely evening, when he’d closed his brief journal: “What a quiet peaceful town. I like it. 12 other artists are here also.” Those dozen young artists were from the Summer Art School of Michigan State University.

Reinhold was not studying art at Valparaiso, which like most universities at the time did not grant art degrees. He was instead studying biology—and while it was useful for an artist to understand function and form in a scientific way, he hungered for the company of other artists. And he found them in Leland.



The family of Reinhold Marxhausen did not learn of his sojourn to northern Michigan until after he died in 2011. His son, Karl, reached out to Fishtown Preservation after discovering a travel journal and sketches and paintings of an unidentified fishing village—which he soon learned was Fishtown. PHOTO COURTESY OF THE MARXHAUSEN FAMILY

He also found a beauty in Lake Michigan that he hadn't seen from Valparaiso, a city only about 20 miles from the water—the southern end of Lake Michigan is in the industrial waterfronts of Gary and Michigan City. He awoke in Leland to fog so dense it was almost liquid, but he spent the entire day in furious activity, producing several sketches and four watercolors (although, he wrote, “only one is any good”).

“I sure like this place,” he wrote. “One gets used to the smell of fish, squawking of gulls, and maggots running all over the place”—which he evidently took as charming, because he followed with, “It is now 8:30 pm and I'm sitting on the sands of Lake Mich. watching the sun set. Believe me it's breath taking—such color. The water becomes orange blue or a green—blue waves on the edge of the shore line. The island is a deep purple. The sun is going in back of the island now.”

Reinhard spent a full week in Leland. “I don't feel lonesome any more,” he wrote. “In fact I would like to stay a few more weeks.” The weather at the cusp of summer was fitful, warm enough to paint shirtless one day, needing an

overcoat the next, but he talked and walked with all of the Art School students—and, more importantly, he painted with them, too. He was not enrolled with them, but the MSU students added his name to their student roster.

On July 1, the traditional start of the summer in Leland and the region, he wrote, “Today will be my last day here. I hate to leave.” What he was already missing wasn't only the company of fellow fledgling artists, but also the stimulation—because he had had a breakthrough. “I made a wonderful discovery today,” he wrote that night. “I went thru a stage today that made me want to paint all the more. It gave me a lift. Up to now I've been doing stiff commercial paintings of every aspect of Fish Town. After all these studies I discovered that I could sit down and do very loose and nice paintings that really had feeling to them. Purely imaginary.” Before sundown the whole group gathered on the beach, with a roaring fire, sandwiches, beer and games. As the fire died away, it began to rain. He slipped away the next morning, too melancholy to say another goodbye.

>> CONTINUED PAGE 7

and stopped. I
waited until
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a storm
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bags were
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Maristee
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I was mighty
everything tur



June 24 - left
Paul Groth and
Joe Trevette the ar
some painting in
well I got on the
very poor - I show
lakes today - trees
very hilly territory.
to Arcadia and met a fellow from Valpo who took
me to Arcadia Camp. It's right along Lake
Mich. a very ritzy set up. Wouldn't mind
spending a few weeks there. Then an old couple
selling strawberries took me to Frankfort. Crystal
lake was beautiful in the woods. Also
Glen Arbor. The story about the sleeping Bear
was interesting. At 7:00 I arrived here in
Iceland. Pop. of 300. Quaint fishing village. Got
an apt. for \$2 15 a nite. Very nice old
lady (dog name is Taffy). The painting
class from Mich. here - had a beach
party tonight. This

FISHTOWN ODYSSEY >> CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

Reinhold never returned to Fishtown, and his family knew nothing of this artistic odyssey for more than 60 years, until after Reinhold's death in 2011. Paul Marxhausen, executor of the estate, asked his brother Karl to organize their father's papers. Reinhold had been a professor of art at Concordia Teacher's College (now University) in Seward, Nebraska, for more than four decades, a seminal influence reflected in the naming of the university art gallery in his honor. The family is placing his papers with the university, which is how Karl began retracing his father's steps.

In one box he found a journal, sketches and watercolors from places that looked unrelated to the Great Plains states he associated with either of his parents. Some of the pieces had fishing boats; one was titled "End of the day, Leland."

Through patient investigation, Karl has found, in places like Fishtown, one of the rarest of glimpses of a parent not only as a person, but as a young person, a young man still trying to find his way, with his future still an unknown. Reinhold—"Reiny" then to his friends, and later "Marxy"—was to the Summer Art School students a worldly figure, only a few years older but a veteran of the war, with both the vigor of youth and the confidence of maturity.

"He wasn't teasing," one of his fellow students remembered about the way he painted. Uncertain people will tease at the pigments, trying to hedge and erase, but Reiny had confidence in his strokes—not confidence he would get it right, but that it would either work or it would not.

"I work with acrylic paint," Karl says. "I love it. It's like colored Wite-Out. If I make a mistake, it can dry, I can fix it." It's the opposite with watercolor. "Once you put the brush stroke on there," he continues, "it's on there. You can't erase it... It really blows my mind," he continues, "that he was using watercolor before he learned to oil paint."

Painting outside, as Reinhold did—as the Summer Art School students often did—redoubled that need for

commitment. "You're really trying to figure out what you're trying to capture," Karl says. "You're making yourself focus, but you're also open in a way. And working fast is critical. Light changes as the day progresses, so shadows change. It's about understanding the fragile task of painting a scene."

Early in his career, in the 1960s, Reinhold created two mosaics for display at the Nebraska Capitol. Through his career he created sculptures, including "sound sculptures" to be carried or even worn that David Letterman invited him to demonstrate on his show in 1986. He painted in oils and watercolors. He created murals and photographs. Yet he did not consider himself a sculptor, a painter, a muralist or a photographer. He was, he said, an artist—someone who taught others to see.

In the 1970s an aspiring photographer took a short but revelatory class with Reinhold at one of the many community workshops he taught. "The official subject was photography," Mark Gordon wrote in 2011, after learning of Reinhold's death at age 89, "but the real subject was seeing. Lessons I learned in those few weeks still guide me more than 30 years later."

Reinhold Marxhausen was something of a disappointment to his own father, a minister, because he pursued the dubious realm of art instead of the ministry. However, son practiced art as an evangelical activity. "God created a most wonderful world to live in," he once wrote, "if we could only see and enjoy it."

Karl believes this discovery of his father's journey—a lifetime's journey, with one long-ago but significant stop in the small village of Leland, Michigan—is also its own odyssey of faith. "I have been led," Karl says of his own journey after his father. "I believe my dad listened to a voice and it was guiding him and it opened up doors. It's a part of his faith; it's a key factor in everything. I see this in my own life," he adds. **"I don't think it's by chance. I think things connect."** ■



OPPOSITE PAGE:
Reinhold Marxhausen
journalled daily during
his travels along the
shores of Lake Michigan.
He discovered the power
of quick study paintings
while in Fishtown.

LEFT:
PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE
MARXHAUSEN FAMILY

MORE THAN BUILDINGS & BOATS

By Daniel Stewart, Contributing Writer

“My favorite preservation project,” Laurie Sommers says, “is Fishtown.”

Laurie Sommers is the author of *Fishtown: Leland, Michigan's Historic Fishery*, a comprehensive history published in 2012. That book, however, is only the most visible part of the work she's done for Fishtown Preservation Society (FPS), most of which has been behind the scenes. When she says that Fishtown is her favorite project, Laurie means more than the affection she's come to feel for Fishtown as her community. She means that, in Fishtown, she's been able to put into practice something larger than historic preservation's traditional tendency to focus on buildings, documents and economics. Fishtown Preservation is about including all the things that make a place, including people and relationships to the natural and built environments.

In other words, Fishtown is Laurie's favorite project because she gets to study and write about the whole thing.

Such an integrated approach seems logical, even obvious, but professions deal with the ever-growing volume of information and knowledge by specializing. Historic preservation developed as a field driven by practical necessities—protecting structures that are vital to their communities from haphazard development, and then using those core buildings and neighborhoods as the kernels for future economic vitality. “The preservation field,” Laurie explains, “is very good at preserving buildings and structures, but not so good at preserving places in a holistic sense.”

The practicalities brought Laurie into the field. “I was initially drawn to historic preservation,” she says, “because I loved both history and environmental conservation. Historic preservation combined both interests.” She began as a volunteer for Michigan's State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) in her hometown of Lansing, Michigan, and grew into various paid posts throughout Michigan

in the 1970s and '80s. She applied to graduate school in historic preservation but also in the less well-known field of folklore, and chose folklore because she wanted to broaden her education beyond the work she was already doing.

That's when she plunged into the gulf between disciplines. Even though she'd already been working for the state of Michigan as an historian, civil-service requirements disqualified anybody with a degree in folklore from any historian position. “This dichotomy between folklore and historic preservation,” she says dryly, “shaped my career for the next 25 years.”

To unite the two parts of her approach, Laurie became a freelance folklorist, working on a mix of traditional folklore projects—folk festivals, museum exhibits, documentary radio, and teaching courses in folklore and ethnomusicology—in five states, including positions with the Michigan State University Museum and the South Georgia Folklife Project at Valdosta State University.

And then, in 2010, she came to do a project on Fishtown.

Laurie Sommers signing copies of her book, *Fishtown: Leland, Michigan's Historic Fishery*, June 2012. She combined her training in folklore and historic preservation in her Fishtown projects.

PHOTO BY DANIEL STEWART





Building a new fish tug was a major investment for a fisherman. Here Marilyn Stallman helps her daughter, Janice Sue, christen Louie Steffens's new tug, complete with a ¼" thick steel hull, in October 1958. A new fishing vessel brought out crowds and represented faith in the industry, ability to adjust to change, and hope for the future of Fishtown.

PHOTO COURTESY OF JANICE SUE STALLMAN KIESSEL

Laurie's connection with Fishtown Preservation was fortuitous but not accidental. Since purchasing the former Carlson properties (and fishing boats) in Fishtown in 2007, Fishtown Preservation has been pursuing the very broad-based approach to preservation that Laurie has followed throughout her own career. Maybe the real luck was that northern Leelanau County happened already to have both Kathryn Bishop Eckert, who had been head of Michigan's SHPO in the 1970s, and Amanda Holmes, with degrees in both folklore and historic preservation. Kathryn and Amanda became, respectively, chairperson and executive director of the new nonprofit venture.

"The fishing season will soon be over," the 1904 article said, "but not the yarns."

With this background, Fishtown Preservation has from the beginning followed two complementary strategies in taking care of Fishtown. First, they focused on developing sound historic preservation planning documents, which culminated in the "Master Plan" of 2009, funded through Michigan Coastal Zone Management. At the same time, they launched an extensive collection of oral histories—a folklore methodology to capture the lived experience of the place, with this part funded by a NOAA Preserve America Initiative Grant.

That's when Kathryn thought of someone she'd known since her days with SHPO who seemed perfect to work on these vital projects: Laurie Sommers. Laurie thus became the historian on the preservation team that in 2011 produced "The River Runs Through It: Report on Historic Structures and Site Design in the Fishtown Cultural Landscape." It was a monumental undertaking, with

Laurie writing the history and members of HopkinsBurns Design Studio and The Johnson Hill Land Ethics Studio providing structural documentation and recommendations for rehabilitation and reconstruction. The report provided a way to see Fishtown as both buildings and as the memories and attachments that, together, make a whole place.

And then Laurie used the report—an internal, technical document—as the source for her history *Fishtown*, so that everyone could share what she'd learned and uncovered.

"This is a place," Laurie says, "where multiple generations of commercial fishermen lived and worked (and still do), continually patching and adapting their wood shanties, ice houses and net sheds; passing on knowledge of their trade from father to son; and sharing stories of experiences on lake and shore. Generations of summer residents, artists and tourists have also formed deep attachments to Fishtown—purchasing fresh fish, observing and painting the rich textures of shanties, fish nets, waters, boats and sky. The memories and experience of all of these groups are essential to creating and understanding the meaning and significance of the place."

Kingston Heath, who directs the historic preservation program at the University of Oregon, has called for a more "humanistic" approach. "[B]uildings and settings, alone, do not make place—people, in their interrelationship with the natural and built environments, make place."

That humanity is the spirit behind Fishtown Preservation. One of Laurie's favorite quotes, from the Leelanau Enterprise written as winter closed in more than a century ago, frames the matter more plainly. "The fishing season will soon be over," the 1904 article said, "but not the yarns." ■

Laurie's book, *Fishtown: Leland, Michigan's Historic Fishery* is available at the Fishtown Welcome Center or the FPS office.



▲ This fish tug image developed by Malcolm Chatfield has been a Leland icon since the 1970s, and now represents the popular Fishtown business, Tug Stuff, owned by Chrissy Chatfield. FPS is grateful to Tug Stuff, as well, for being a Fishtown Business Anchor since 2011. PHOTO BY AMANDA HOLMES

► Fishtown Preservation honored two special people at its Fishtown Anchor appreciation event, Berkley Duck (right), President of the Fishtown Preservation Society (FPS) Board of Directors, and Joel Petersen (left), the Captain of the commercial trap net vessel, *Joy*. Without both of these men FPS would not be where it is today.

PHOTO BY MEGGEN WATT PETERSEN

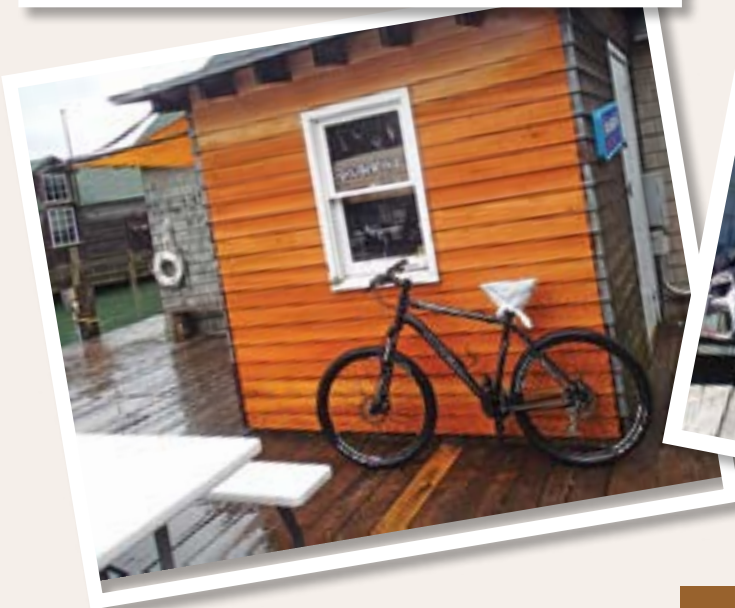


SUMMER S



◀ (Counter clockwise from left) Mike Brigham, co owner of Lake Ann Hardwoods, delivers white oak logs for Fishtown benches; after discovering carpenter ants had caused extensive damage, FPS put new siding on the Bead Hut; Lisa Preckel (right, owner of the Bead Hut) and friend Angela Tomes, take in some sun.

PHOTOS BY AMANDA HOLMES





NAPSHOTS

► In early 2016 FPS acquired a fish shanty vacation rental on the Leland River from the Carlson family and decided to have a raffle for a shanty stay to spread the word. The winner of the 2017 drawing is Gina Erb (above), shown here with her husband, John. The 2016 winners (right) enjoyed their week this June, including Lori and Nick Mancini, and their three daughters Georgia, Liliana and Eve.

PHOTOS BY AMANDA HOLMES



▼ The Fishtown 5K challenges serious runners with a scenic and hilly course, but also attracts families and fun. Kathryn Strietmann (left) won best costume for her rendition of the tug *Janice Sue*. PHOTOS BY HEIDI TAGG AND MADDY ZIMMERMAN



◀ The Fishtown docks offer intimate access to Fishtown 24 hours a day and 365 days a year. When the charter boats are out on Lake Michigan anglers line the river hoping to make their catch right at the dock.

PHOTO BY AMANDA HOLMES





Raquel Jimenez and Joel Petersen aboard Fishtown Preservation's trap net vessel, *Joy*, August 2017. As part of Raquel's summer internship she ventured to learn all she could about what Joel does to bring whitefish to port, starting with the patience and skills of shore work. PHOTO BY AMANDA HOLMES

LEARNING THE ROPES

By Raquel Jimenez, FPS Summer 2017 Intern

I received a text at 8:30am from Joel Petersen asking, “Ready to start commercial fishing training today?”

Equipped with a camera and a raincoat for the potentially stormy day ahead, I walked between the shanties on the south side of the Leland River in Fishtown to the *Joy*, where Joel was already at work.

Though I had only been fishing once before with my brother, I didn’t want to come off as a newbie. The first time I talked to Joel about the possibility of going out commercial fishing, I said, “I don’t want to get in you guys’ way.” He assured me that, “Everyone’s in the way their first time fishing,” but after spending a day working with Joel, it’s hard to picture a time he was as lost as I was.

Joel Petersen is the captain of the *Joy*, a commercial fishing vessel owned by the Fishtown Preservation Society (FPS). The boat is licensed to catch whitefish with a trap net. This and other commercial fishing vessels are becoming a rarity on Lake Michigan. The commercial fishing industry has overcome many obstacles in its history. However, increasing governmental regulations are convincing more and more fishermen to leave the business. The *Joy* and her captain are keeping commercial fishing alive in Fishtown.

Before going out fishing on the *Joy*, I had plenty to learn on shore. Fishing is far from the safest job out there, so Joel started with emergency training. My first lesson included the locations of the fire extinguishers: below the wheel, under the seat, stashed behind the waders and a giant one stored next to the engine. And then flares—one for day use that emits orange smoke, one for night that throws a flame, and a parachute flare in case the boat is sinking. Joel said he’s never had to use the flares. He didn’t mention anything about the fire extinguishers.

The last part of emergency training involved an immersion suit—a large, bright red onesie I liked to call “The Teletubby Suit.” Joel demonstrated how to get the suit out of its bright orange storage bag, unrolled it on the deck of the *Joy* and pointed out its features—attached gloves and boots keep your hands and feet warm, a pillow

that is inflatable by mouth to keep your head above water, and a strobe light to help rescuers find you. He rolled it back up and handed it to me, saying that I would need to be able to put in on in less than a minute.

I raced to unroll, pick it up and step into it, but struggled under its weight. “You don’t have to worry about the time right now,” he reassured me, and I calmed down. Joel told me that the trick was to leave it unrolled on the ground, sit down, and scooch into it. After following those instructions, I stood up and pulled so hard to get the zipper up that the suit slid up over my eyes. Joel laughed and explained that it went up so high to keep the water out. I pulled the suit down enough so I could see. While I had needed some help from Joel, I imagined I didn’t miss the one-minute mark by too much, and would be invincible in the cold water of Lake Michigan.

I had never heard of trap net fishing prior to this summer, so I was struggling to picture how this net was shaped, let alone how it got set to the floor of Lake Michigan, even following Joel’s explanation. Sensing my confusion, he sketched a diagram of a trap net, its arrangement of buoys, weights and different types of lines, which was very illuminating.

Everything that Joel showed me revealed precision and attention to detail. This included how to tie rope to the anchors. I watched as Joel used a series of half hitches to attach the rope to either side of the anchor with a loop in the middle. He picked the anchor up by the newly attached loop and checked to see if it was centered. “That looks straightforward,” I remarked. My confidence ended three seconds later when I didn’t know which way the half hitch was supposed to face. I realized that just because Joel—a fisherman of 27 years—made it look easy, didn’t mean that it was. Joel corrected me and I continued.

>> CONTINUED PAGE 14

LEARNING THE ROPES << CONTINUED FROM PAGE 13

This pattern of patient trial and error continued, until the anchor was ready to go. On my lunch break I tried to recreate the knots in my head. After lunch, we tied the ropes to two more anchors and I was excited to see that I improved the second-time around.

Stacked in a pile nearby were anchors that needed to be repaired. I was surprised to hear that Joel fixes them himself. As the day went by I stopped being surprised as I learned that fishermen do pretty much all of the jobs required to keep their operations going—fixing nets, repairing anchors, making weights for the lines. Joel even helped make the skiff, the smaller boat that is used in conjunction with the *Joy* to help set the nets.

The last job of the day was to take a lead net off the truck bed where it was stored and coil it onto a tarp so that it would unwind seamlessly when it was being set. We worked together, pulling the net foot by foot off the truck bed, encountering chaotic gray knots of twists and catches. Every time we came across a knot—Joel flicked the line in his hand or tossed part of the net over itself and the knot would vanish. When a catch appeared on my side of the net, I was understandably intimidated. We would stop pulling and I would toss and yank the net back and forth, trying to figure out the trick. Joel would point and say, “it’s caught right there on that knot.” Then I’d grab the line off that knot and the net would untangle. As we worked through the net, I started to get a better grasp of it, smiling proudly when I fixed a catch on my own.

It began to rain, and though I had been told that fishermen work through any weather, Joel suggested we take cover. We stood in the net shed, watched the front

roll in and listened to the rain on the metal roof. I asked Joel about fishing with his family in Muskegon and his experience fishing out of Leland. As we were talking about all the jobs and skills required to fish, I suddenly thought, Wait, does he even have a crew? The answer was no. Joel does all of his fishing out of Leland without the help of a consistent crew. Commercial fishing cannot be done by one person, so Joel gets help from the guys at Carlson’s Fishery when they are available, or his dad when he can come up from Muskegon, or—to a very small extent—me.

This realization made Joel’s perseverance as a commercial fisherman even more impressive to me. Fewer and fewer people are fishing for their livelihoods and there are increasing hindrances to their success. At the beginning of the day I thought Joel was simply being generous to train me so I could learn a thing or two for my internship. But I soon realized he is willing to train those who show an interest so he will have enough crew members to do what he loves most and pass on the tradition of fishing.

I worked the rest of the day grateful for the opportunity to be a part of this resilient industry. After the rain stopped, we finished coiling the lead net and cinched the tarp closed with a large rope. We pulled the heavy tarp toward the boat. And then we were done for the day.

Joel texted me after I left asking whether I could help him pack up another lead the next day. I was thrilled to have passed the lead-packing test and honored to be invited back. My first day of training—practicing the skills required for the job, the quiet and beautiful work space, the expertise and love for fishing that keeps the commercial industry alive, **all of it – had captivated me.** ■



Joel Petersen, captain of the *Joy*, demonstrates how to tie ropes to trap net anchors, May 2017. Setting each trap net in Lake Michigan requires up to ten anchors. PHOTOS BY RAQUEL JIMENEZ

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Janie, a friend of Fishtown

Elizabeth Jane Whiting Domke ("Janie" to all) passed away peacefully on November 20, 2016. Janie was an avid supporter of Fishtown, with a gigantic influence for one of small stature. Her creativity and generosity touched many. Her daughter Nell Revel Smith shared, "She wasn't afraid of color or trying new things. She always had a 'project' whether it be in the garden, painting, needlepointing, decorating or building a house." Janie especially loved that her granddaughter, Maggie Revel Mielczarek, opened a store in Fishtown called Leland gal. Janie was her first customer.



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Thanks for all you've done and *continue to do* to ensure we have Fishtown Forever

TEN YEARS & COUNTING

Starting from scratch, since 2007, Fishtown Preservation has created an effective and successful historic preservation organization. We have:

- Paid the first of two installments of the debt incurred with the 2007 acquisition of our Fishtown properties (February 2007)
- Paid the debt incurred with the 2016 property purchase of the south side of the Leland River (January 2017)
- Completed several major planning and research projects
- Maintained and rehabilitated most of the shanties
- Continued renting the shanties for retail operations on the site (following accepted principles of adaptive reuse)
- Installed interpretive exhibits
- Opened the Fishtown Welcome Center
- Improved the infrastructure
- Restored commercial fishing operations from our docks

All of this has been possible because of the generosity of our supporters and their recognition of the importance of Fishtown to our community and the region. Fishtown Preservation now has over 570 active annual contributors including 150 "Anchors," individuals and business who have committed to ongoing support of our Annual Fund.

BE A FRIEND OF FISHTOWN

There are many ways you can be a financial contributor to Fishtown Preservation, and this table provides what we hope will be a handy guide. If you have questions, please give us a call or email Amanda Holmes at aholmes@fishtownmi.org

Annual Fund Our do-it-all fund that supports the day-to-day operations of Fishtown Preservation Society (FPS).

Anchor Program Supporters who commit to donating a minimum amount to the Annual Fund, beginning at either \$500 for Personal Anchors or \$250 for Business Anchors.

Special Projects Funds for specific bricks and mortar projects, such as the Carlson's Fishery rehabilitation, the foundations of the Village Cheese Shop and the Morris Shanty, and landscape restoration.

Planned Gift Create your own Fishtown legacy with gifts by bequest or estate. A planned gift will endow Fishtown's future.

Endowment Long-term financial resources to support and promote the activities and programs of FPS.

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RIGHT:

Ian Hood, Darryl Herman and Dryden Schade take a quick break from their work in Carlson's Fishery, August 2017. They have also each served as crew for commercial fisherman Joel Petersen, who captains Fishtown Preservation's vessel, *Joy*.

PHOTO BY AMANDA HOLMES

ON THE COVER:

Pictured left to right, Oscar Price, Bill Firestone, Will Carlson, and an unknown man gather ca. 1925 to share stories next to the old Price Shanty, near the current location of the Village Cheese Shanty. PHOTO COURTESY OF

THE LEELANAU HISTORICAL SOCIETY

