

# FISHTOWN PRESERVATION

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PHOTO BY DANIEL STEWART



Ruth Hesse, Fishtown Preservation Intern 2014

## WHAT DO YOU SEE?

A Letter from **Amanda Holmes**, FPS Executive Director (PICTURED LEFT)

The gifts began coming at the end of the summer, as the tempo in Fishtown relaxed from *frenzied* to *just busy*, and they were marked to honor the memory of **Howard Heinzl**. I've met hundreds—maybe thousands—of people in Fishtown over the past eleven years, but I never met Howard. All I knew about him was in the brief note his daughter Jennifer wrote the day he passed away in late August. “My dad loved Leland,” she wrote simply.

I see Fishtown almost every day, from angles few others have—above docks and below, inside and out, through water low and high, and through winters mild and fierce. But Fishtown is more than shanties and docks and gravel and boats. What often surprises me—and what I am always trying to understand—is what other people see in Fishtown. What did Howard Heinzl, an Iowa native, love so much that his friends and family were giving to preserve Fishtown in his name?

So I asked his daughter. **Jenn Collins** and her husband, Michael, own Two Fish Gallery in Leland and have been supporters of Fishtown for many years. The idea, she told me, came to her on her hurried drive to reach her father in Des Moines. She and her family wanted to honor him and his life. They were already agreed about Hospice of Iowa, for the care they had given him at the end of his life—but what gift would honor the breadth of the life of such a devoted family man and outdoorsman?

She mentioned Fishtown Preservation at a family meal. “Before I could even start telling them how wonderful you are, they loved it,” she said. “Something in Leland! Something related to history! Something related to fishing! Something where the money would be specifically used to preserve the area my dad loved so much. He so loved his years in Leland, and his time fishing on both Lake Leelanau and Lake Michigan were among his best days.”

I used to think of Iowa as a landlocked state, but Fishtown has plenteous roots there. Jenn told me both of her parents loved to spend time on the water, including summer weekends on a houseboat on Saylorville Lake near Des Moines. Saylorville is a reservoir and the water there is dark—“definitely no seeing your toes in that lake!” she said—which helps to explain why Howard loved Leland, “with so much beautiful water surrounding them.”

The best part of my work with Fishtown Preservation is in moments like this small glimpse of Fishtown through Howard's eyes. Sometimes I'm able to experience the revelation in real time, too. This happens almost every summer with our summer interns. Most of our interns apply because they know this region. In 2014, for instance, **Ruth Hesse** came to put to use a lifetime of Leland summers. She began fishing the docks alongside her grandfather as soon as she could hold a pole and holds the family record for most fish caught in one sitting. Ruth was ready for Fishtown, right?

Of course not! Ruth discovered that Fishtown overflows with personalities—with the different perspectives of each person who has a stake (and a voice) in this place. She wasn't ready to meet so many people, so quickly—nor that they could be impatient, preoccupied, even disputatious. She kept a journal that summer, and after one especially trying day, she wrote, “I don't think I have ever witnessed that kind of drama from teenage girls.”

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“Fishtown is what we make of it—and what we give to it.”

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Being inside can be messy, but joyful, too—literally, for Ruth was able to go fishing aboard the *Joy*. She was nervous about being on the big water—she'd never been on Lake Michigan in any boat smaller than the carferry *S.S. Badger*—but arriving before dawn at an already wide-awake Fishtown was calming. The morning mixed meditative stretches on the still water with the rapid, purposeful dance of lifting, emptying and sorting the catch from the trap nets. Ruth measured scores of squirming, slimy fish on a metal tray, under the kind, patient direction of Captain Joel Petersen and alongside Chris Herman and Darryl Herman, all who live no distinction between hard work and fun. The morning's work was somehow done too soon. "I would have been happy to be out there all day," Ruth wrote.

By summer's end, Ruth knew she had crossed a threshold. "After twenty years of simply visiting," she wrote, "I have now found a place in the community. Instead of being an observer I have been able to become a part of it all, and I cannot express how much this has meant to me."



Fishtown is what we make of it—and what we give to it. I'm grateful I was able to learn about Howard's love for Fishtown—but I also feel a little regret, too, that I didn't know him until now. That's why I want to mention **Joan Larson**, in whose memory Fishtown Preservation has also received many gifts this fall. I have had the great pleasure to know both Joan and her husband, Will, for the whole time I've known Fishtown, which is but a fraction of the 50 years they have known Fishtown. They've been Leland regulars ever since they moved to Cincinnati in 1963.

Joan and Will have been involved in saving Fishtown from the beginning, and in their estate plan they arranged a substantial gift to Fishtown Preservation each year—forever. I'm not surprised, however, if this is the first you've heard about their deep involvement. They have always been modest about it. In the photos I have from Fishtown events, I usually find them on the edges—out of the spotlight, but always a lovely and attentive audience.

I'm drawing a little attention to them here because I want you to know how much Fishtown meant and means to both Joan and Will. Even as her health failed, Joan paid close attention to what was happening in Fishtown. I think she never wanted to make a fuss over what she and Will have done because, as she saw it, you do what you can for the place you call home.

What you would see today in Fishtown is a light fall of snow. Autumn lingered for us, but now winter seems to be arriving, just in time to brighten the holidays. When Fishtown has buttoned up for the season it can seem a small place, but I know it's large in our lives. I know this because of the many small moments I see, like **Anna Geoghegan**, an intern in 2015, standing in a drenching rain at the end of a Fishtown event but unable to stop smiling, or **Will Larson**, in his 80s, cruising around town on his bicycle looking like a little boy with mischief on his mind.

And there are moments I don't see, such as when Jenn Collins, in Two Fish Gallery at 5:00 am trying to catch a little quiet work time before the day's summer rush, hears a knock on the door. It's her father, Howard, on his way to the water. "I would look up from my computer, and we would both wave," she said. "Then off he would go to the harbor."

The moments I see, the many moments I miss—what each of us sees in Fishtown *is* Fishtown. All of it.

I'll leave some closing words to **Caitlin Clough**, who interned alongside Ruth in 2014. At season's end Caitlin wanted to leave behind some advice for the interns who would follow her. "You will never get another opportunity to work for an organization like this," she wrote, "so I suggest you *carpe diem* the heck out of this internship! You are going to do such great things here!"



**What do you see in Fishtown?** The year is drawing to its close, and we hope you will consider Fishtown Preservation for your year-end gift, and continue to think about Fishtown into the New Year. Please give if, like us, you look at Fishtown and you see *something great*.

*Amanda Holmes*



**Howard R. Heinzl** enjoying a warm summer day on Lake Leelanau with his daughters (LEFT TO RIGHT) Jenn Collins, Ann West and Julie Roether. The photo was taken August 1, Howard passed away on August 21, 2017.

PHOTO COURTESY OF JENNIFER COLLINS

Will and **Joan Larson** enjoyed Fishtown together since 1963, when friends introduced them to Leland. Joan Larson passed away on September 27, 2017. In October, Will said that this is a favorite photo of him and Joan.



They were both champions of preserving Fishtown, from the troubled days in 2005, when Fishtown's future was in doubt, to the present. In their estate plan they arranged a generous gift to Fishtown Preservation each year—forever.

PHOTO COURTESY OF WILFRED J. LARSON

**THANK YOU** for keeping Fishtown in your life and doing what you can to make sure Fishtown is here forever. There are many ways you can be a financial contributor to Fishtown Preservation, including our Annual Fund, Anchor Sustainer Program, Special Projects, Planned Giving and Endowment Fund.

The preservation of Fishtown has been possible because of the generosity of our supporters and their recognition of the importance of Fishtown to our community and the region.

**Gifts in Memory**

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*(Happy Anniversary)*  
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## FALL 2017 IN FISHTOWN | Great Lakes Fisheries Heritage Consortium and JOY Sparkling Wine



### GLFHC Annual Meeting

Great Lakes Fisheries Heritage Consortium held its 5th annual conference this past October in Fishtown. The network represents a partnership among museum, maritime heritage, and fisheries partners cooperating across the state to promote our fisheries heritage. The group is currently working on a trail system for people to be able to celebrate and experience our Great Lakes fisheries heritage while traveling in Michigan.



▲ Brian Price (UPPER LEFT) tells members of the Great Lakes Fisheries Heritage Consortium stories of his years working with commercial fisherman Ross Lang on the trap-netter *Joy*. (UPPER RIGHT) Conference attendees Sandy and Carol Bryson, of the Michigan Maritime Museum, and Gail Vander Stoep, from the Michigan State University Dept. of Community Sustainability, prepare to head out for a ride on the gill-netter *Janice Sue*.



### JOY Sparkling Wine

◀ Joy Lang Anderson (LEFT), for whom Fishtown Preservation's commercial fishing vessel *Joy* is named, holds a bottle of Fishtown Preservation's JOY, a sparkling, dry white wine made by L. Mawby Vineyards. Two dollars from every bottle sold is being donated by L. Mawby Vineyards to help preserve Fishtown. The wine was launched at an event this fall in Fishtown and will be available through 2018. For a list of retailers carrying the wine visit [FishtownMI.org](http://FishtownMI.org) or call Fishtown Preservation at 231-256-8878.