



# Waterlines

Spring 2014

## Earthquake and Tsunami 50 Years Ago: March 27, 1964



*Downtown Kodiak after tsunamis swept ashore on March 27, 1964. (Photo: Deedie Pearson)*

After 50 years, the memory of the Great Alaskan Earthquake and the tsunamis which followed are still fresh in the minds of many older Kodiak residents. The event had a profound effect on the lives of hundreds of people on Kodiak Island, and on the infrastructure of the town and villages.

While the 9.2 earthquake lasted a very long five minutes, damage was minimal in Kodiak. However, the series of tsunami waves which followed over the next 12 hours took the lives of thirteen people on Kodiak Island and changed forever

the physical character of downtown Kodiak, Afognak Village, Old Harbor, and Kaguyak..

While several people lost their lives in Kodiak, and the harbor and several dozen buildings were destroyed, the village of Kaguyak was completely inundated and several of its residents lost their lives. The residents relocated to Anchorage and other villages on Kodiak Island, and never returned to live in the village.

Old Afognak Village was similarly abandoned when subsidence caused by the earthquake permanently flooded the village, causing villagers to relocate to a new village at Port Lions.

Much of downtown Kodiak was bulldozed away in the Federal Urban Renewal program following the tsunami, including many buildings which had suffered only slight, damage, or none at all. Urban Renewal funding replaced old Kodiak with a new street plan, a new look to the business core, and a new boat harbor.

## 25 Years Ago: Exxon Valdez Oil Spill March 27, 1989

To mark the 25th anniversary of the Exxon Valdez Oil Spill, KMM will host a round table seminar at Kodiak Comfish on Saturday, April 19th at 2:45 p.m. at the Best Western Kodiak Inn.

Attorney Matt Jamin, a lead attorney in the EVOS Punitive Damages lawsuit, and former Kodiak Island Borough Mayor Jerome Selby, will be part of the discussion.

KMM will also display photographs of the spill taken around the island in the summer of 1989.

Oil from the *Exxon Valdez*, washed out of Prince William Sound in March 1989, came ashore around Kodiak in mid-May, and eventually reached as far as Chignik.

A protest march by hundreds of Kodiak residents on May 24, 1989, led Exxon to institute a large scale clean-up of Kodiak Island led by contractor Veco Inc. However, except for a few setnet areas in Alitak Bay, the commercial salmon season stayed closed that year.

For the fishing fleet and many Kodiak residents, the spill remains a watershed historical event.

### Inside this issue:

KMM Board of Directors News: New Faces Come Aboard While Longtimers Retire	2
From the Wheelhouse	2
<i>Fishermen Out Loud</i> Returns April 26th	3
The Beachcombers Bar Remembered	4
KMM Debuts 1964 Tsunami Walking Tour	5
Harbor Lights Festival	5
<i>Thelma C</i> prints Go On Sale	6



*Kodiak residents protest the Exxon Valdez Oil Spill, May 24, 1989 (Photo: Aleda Yourdon Collection)*

## From the Wheelhouse —

March is a big month for Alaska maritime history, and especially for Kodiak., with both the 50th anniversary of the 1964 earthquake and tsunami, and the 25th anniversary of the Exxon Valdez Oil Spill happening this year.

Those would be big, memorable events anywhere, but for a town of 10,000 people, especially on an island isolated from other places, the earthquake and tsunami and the oil spill remain large, almost cataclysmic events in our communal memory.

And although fifty and twenty five years have passed, I've heard a few people this spring say things like, "I can't believe it's been fifty years, since the tidal wave," or " Amazing- a quarter of a century since the spill," which just goes to show that time is a funny thing, and hard to measure with memory. But still, the earthquake and the spill are rapidly receding into the past, and it's good to mark their anniversaries, and to tell our children and our grandchildren what happened, so that past is not forgotten.

-Toby Sullivan, Executive Director

### KODIAK MARITIME MUSEUM

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## New Faces on the KMM Board of Directors

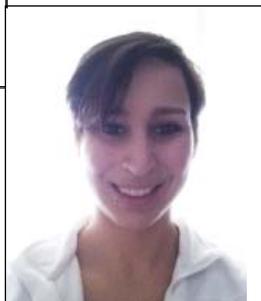
**Heather Abena** came aboard with KMM in December. Heather is originally from Cathlamet, Washington, and moved to Kodiak recently to join her husband, Kevin, who runs the F/V *Big Blue*.



Heather Abena joined the KMM Board in December.

Heather works for the Coast Guard's MWR program, and was drawn to the museum through her connection to the fishing industry.

**Natalie Wadle** also joined the board in December. She works as an assistant curator at the Alutiiq Museum, and works with another KMM Board Member there, Marnie Leist. Natalie has lived in Kodiak since she was seven and graduated from Kodiak High, and has a degree in art and design from Iowa State.



Natalie Wadle joined the KMM Board in December.

Natalie works with collections, exhibits, and volunteers at the Alutiiq and is hoping to translate those skills and experience into helping KMM with its own program and exhibits.

Natalie is also part of Kodiak's Von Scheele family, and grew up hearing a lot of stories about old Kodiak. We think that can only help her on the KMM Board.

## Deedie Pearson and Al Burch Step Down From Board of Directors

**Deedie Pearson** resigned from the KMM Board of Directors in December 2013. She had served on the Board since 2002 and was Board Secretary for many years.

Deedie arrived in Kodiak in 1941 as a young girl with her siblings and parents when her father, Al Owen, came north from Seattle to help build the Navy Base in Woman's Bay. The family subsequently gillnetted salmon and operated a small salmon cannery in Uganik Bay from the 1940s to the early 1970s. Deedie continued to gillnet salmon there every summer until the late 1990s while her husband Jim seined with his boat the *Dawn Mist*.

Deedie's knowledge of the history and people of Kodiak, and especially the west side of Kodiak Island in those years, was extensive, and she brought that knowledge to the museum.

She also served in years past on the Board of the Kodiak Historical Society, which operates the Baranov Museum.



Deedie Pearson in downtown Kodiak immediately after the '64 tsunami.

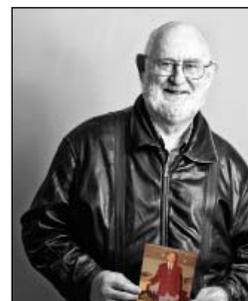
**Al Burch** was a Kodiak Maritime Museum Director from 2004 until his resignation in December 2013.

Originally from Montana, Al first came to Alaska as a ten year old in 1946 when his mother brought Al and brother Bill to join their older brother Oral, who had served in the military in Alaska during World War II. The family settled in Seward in 1954.

In 1964, after Al and Oral's boat the *Celtic*, was destroyed by the tsunami in Seward, they moved to Kodiak and the expanding shrimp fishery. When shrimp declined in the early 1980s, they began dragging for bottom fish with their boats the *Dawn* and *Dusk*.

Al was a vital force in Alaskan fish politics for many years, and helped convince Congress to write and pass the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Act of 1976, which expanded U.S. territorial waters and commercial fish management, out to 200 miles.

Al brought a deep knowledge of Kodiak's fisheries to the Board, and helped KMM chart its way through its early years.



Al Burch in 2011

## Fishermen Out Loud Returns April 26th

After a four year hiatus, *Fishermen Out Loud* will appear at the Kodiak Harbor Convention Center April 26, as part of Kodiak Arts Council's 2014 Performing Art Series.

Featuring performances of original poems, stories, and songs from six seasoned mariners, the event is Kodiak's public expression of an ancient maritime tradition- fishermen going down to the sea in ships to pull a living from the sea, and coming back to tell the tale.

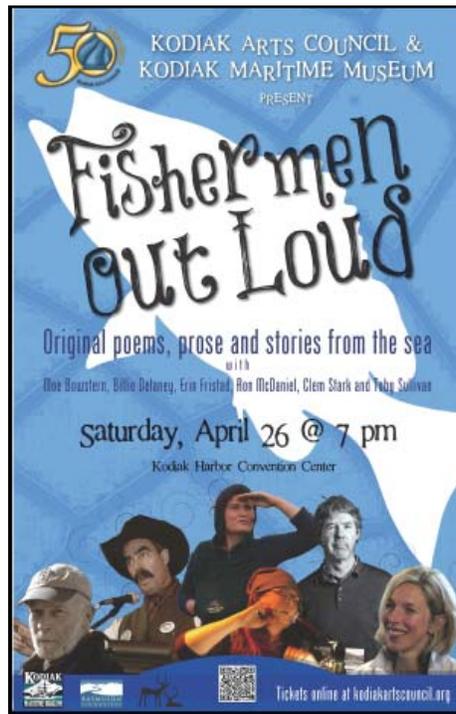
Returning this year will be story teller Moe Bowstern, fisherwoman and poet Erin Fristad, and local writer Toby Sullivan. Newcomers this year are fisherwoman Billie Delaney, from Port Townsend, Washington, and Clem Starck, a renowned poet and former merchant mariner from Dallas, Oregon.

Special guest artist Ron McDaniel, a cowboy poet from Arkansas, will also grace the stage.

Moe Bowstern has worked on fishing boats since 1986. She is founder and editor 'zine *Xtra Tuf*, which chronicles the experiences and adventures of commercial fisher folk. She performs annually at the Astoria, Ore. Fisher Poets Gathering and has appeared at previous Fishermen Out Loud shows in Kodiak, the Sea Music Festival in Mystic, Conn., the Working Waterfront Festival in New Bedford, Mass., and Tony's Bar, "Kodiak's Biggest Navigational Hazard," among other places.

Erin Fristad survived fifteen years as a deckhand chasing herring in Togiak, crab off the Columbia River, salmon more places than she can remember, and for five years pursued fish in the name of science. She lives in Port Townsend, Washington, where she continues to write.

Erin was a subject in the documentary film, "The Fisher Poets," and her poems have been published in many places including Rosebud, America's Review, and The Seattle Review. Her poem *Advice to Female Deckhands*, was included in the Salmon Nations Artists Project CD. She is a regular performer at the Fisher Poets Gathering in Astoria, Oregon.



Clem Starck sailed off the West Coast as a deckhand with the Seafarers International Union (SIU) in the late '60s and has since worked as a carpenter and construction foreman.

He has published five books of poetry, is a recipient of the Oregon Book Award for Poetry and the William Stafford Memorial Poetry Award from the Pacific Northwest Booksellers Association. Clem lives in rural Oregon.

Although Ron McDaniel is not a commercial fisherman, he claims to have eaten more wild salmon than any bowlegged man alive. Ron lives in Arkansas and is a husband a father of three kids. They keep a few horses and graze some calves in order to maintain their debtor relationship with the bank. Ron manages the horse business for an animal health company and works for the Adams Cattle Company. As a testament to his skills, the cow boss there says "hiring Ron was like losing two good men." Invited to the Fisher Poets Gathering in Astoria several years ago, he's like a cowboy who keeps showing up at your house every year to sleep on your couch.

Toby Sullivan has been a commercial

## Fisher Poets to Present Writing Workshops

Visiting Fishermen Out Loud poets and writers will present two writing workshops on April 25th and 26th.

At 10 am on Saturday April 26th, visiting writer and fisherwoman Erin Fristad will lead a community writing workshop at the Kodiak Wildlife Refuge downtown Visitor's Center. The two-hour workshop, "Bring Your Truth and Make it Better," is a face-paced workshop designed to provide writers with a new set of writer's tools.

Taking one idea through a series of writing exercises, the workshop is intended to challenge and expand a writer's presentation of the "truth." Following each exercise will be an opportunity to share and discuss their work. All aspiring and working local writers are encouraged to attend this free writing workshop.

On Friday, April 25th, the visiting writers will work with high school students in Melissa Dover's and Lee Ann Schemelzenbach's Language Arts classes. With help from her fellow artists, Erin Fristad will lead "Where I'm From: Real Poetry by Real People," a 90 minute workshop designed for young writers.

fisherman since 1975 and writes about the sea and the lives of fishermen. A long time performer at the Fisher Poets Gathering in Astoria, his work has been published in numerous magazines, literary journals, and anthologies, and he was featured in the film, "The Fisher Poets," (2004). He lives in Kodiak.

In 2009, Kodiak Konfidential blog described Fishermen Out Loud as "The single most entertaining evening I've spent in Kodiak, bar none ever." We aim to top that bar on April 26th. See you there!



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## The Beachcombers Hotel and Bar: A Legacy of the Tsunami

Like many other establishments in Kodiak, the legendary Beachcombers Bar was first destroyed, and then transformed by the tsunamis of March 1964. Originally established in 1957 in a log cabin on Mission Road by Henry "Legs," Lagrue, and his wife Edie, the nightclub was swept into Potato Patch Lake by the tsunami, where it was burned in place afterwards. Within weeks the Legrues hatched a plan to rebuild, but not in an expected way.

Ray Legrue, Legs and Edie's son, was fourteen years old when he saw the first tsunami come across Mission Rd. From the hillside above Potato Patch Lake he watched the water flood, but not destroy, the building. Half an hour later, after the wave receded, he helped the bar's band stack their instruments on chairs on the stage, thinking they would be safe if the water rose again. But each of the next three or four waves which followed at 50 minute intervals were higher than the one before, and during the night the building was swept into the lake behind it.



Edie and Henry "Legs" Lagrue, owners of the Beachcombers Bar. Photo: Ray Legrue

A few months later, while other business owners in Kodiak ordered lumber and building materials, the Legrues bought a 250 foot steamship, the former *Princess Norah*, and had it towed to Kodiak.

The ship had been launched in

Govan, Scotland in 1929, and served as a coastal steamer on the west coast of Vancouver Island and up the Inside Passage for thirty five years. Renamed the *Queen of the North* in 1955, and then the *Canadian Prince* in 1958, the Legrues took possession in late 1964.

In December, with the engines removed to lighten her, and on the highest tide of the year, the ship was nudged and pulled by two tugs and three bulldozers through a channel across Mission Road and graveled in beside Potato Patch Lake. An exterior stairway was built to the saloon deck, and instantly, the ship was a landmark.

The ship featured a full service dining room and a fancy nightclub with live music. Legs even built a wine cellar below the dining room, in an effort to convince customers to buy wine instead of drinks, which had to be fetched by the waitresses from the main bar a hundred feet beyond and one narrow stairway above the dining room. The Beachcombers was a hit in a town full of thirsty fishermen and construction workers.

At first, the Legrues intended the club to be a bar only, but in a perennial Kodiak housing shortage made worse by the King



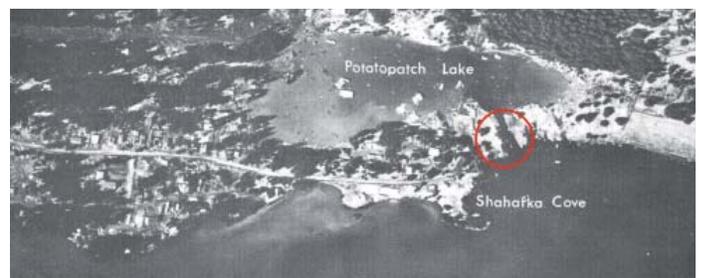
The Beachcombers Bar, 1964. Photo: KMM Pete Deveau Collection

Crab boom, fishermen and cannery workers clamored to stay in the ship's staterooms. Business people always, the Legrues began renting them out, and the ship became the Beachcombers Bar and Hotel. Through the 60s and 70s the bar was a legendary watering hole, famous among fishermen from Mexico to Nome. In January 1976 however, with maintenance costs rising and the ship falling into disrepair, the Legrues closed the bar and hotel, and after several failed deals to sell it, shut it up for good.

In 1977, with the ship dark and empty across the parking lot, they built a new nightclub next door with the same name. With the *Princess Norah's* masts holding up the ceiling, and her railings with their fine hardwood caps set around a stainless steel dance floor, the new Beachcombers became again, for a few more years, a state of the art night spot in Kodiak. In the mid 1980s, with a changing Kodiak bar culture, the Legrues sold the bar building to the Salvation Army, which owns it to this day.

The ship however was done. In the late 1980s Ray Legrue, now running the family business, had the hull scrapped. Some of the steel went to shore up the bulkheads at TT Fuller's boat yard on the channel. The keel and bow stem remained in the ground, cut off at ground level and mostly buried beneath what is now the Salvation Army parking lot on Mission Road.

Still though, if a person walks out into the grass beside the lake, the bow stem can still be seen, a black knob of steel sticking out of the ground, a relic of a Scottish shipyard, thirty odd years of steaming around Vancouver Island, and the glory days of Kodiak's King Crab years and the fishing and drinking culture that went with it.



Potato Patch Lake after the tsunami in 1964, showing the channel through which the *Princess Norah* was towed ashore. (Photo: United States Geodetic Survey)

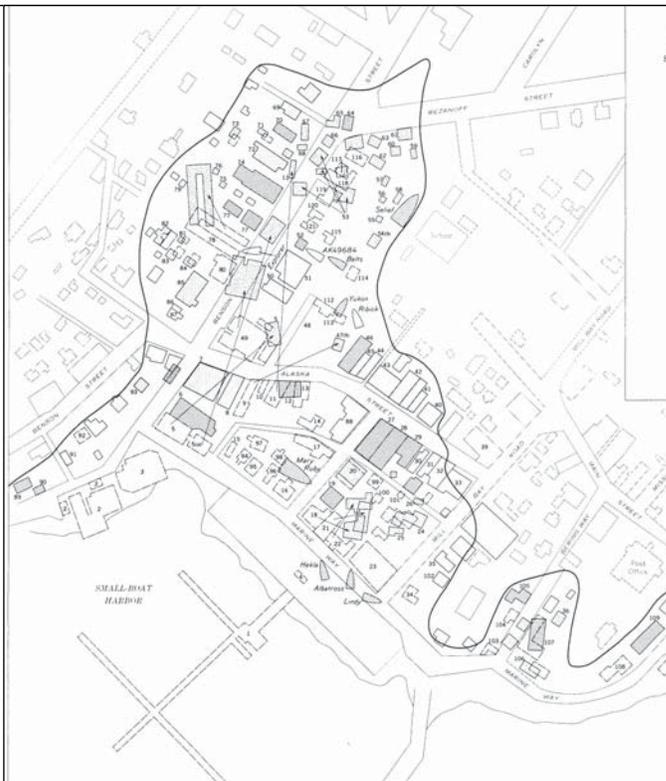
## KMM Debuts Tsunami Walking Tour

On the 50th anniversary of the March 27, 1964 Great Alaskan Earthquake, KMM Executive Director Toby Sullivan led about twenty people on a new walking tour which helps visitors get a better understanding of what it was like to live through the earthquake and tsunami in Kodiak.

The new “You Are There: March 27, 1964,” tour takes visitors on a moment-by-moment excursion back in time to the afternoon and evening of the earthquake and tsunami. The 90 minute tour stops at ten places in the downtown area where people felt the earthquake and saw the tsunamis come ashore.

By placing visitors where people were that afternoon in March 1964 the tour attempts to re-create the experience of the earthquake and tsunami. The tour is also a way to help visitors and those who came to Kodiak after 1964 to visualize the infrastructure of the town and the harbor as they existed before the tsunamis destroyed many buildings, and before Urban Renewal bulldozed much of the rest of the downtown away, including many undamaged structures.

With maps in hand, the tour walks people through the downtown while tour guides point out the locations of vanished streets and buildings from old Kodiak. The museum will begin offering the tour on a regular basis later this spring. For more information contact the museum at 486-0384.



Run-up of 1964 Tsunami in downtown Kodiak Map: U.S. Geodetic Survey



The Princess Norah being towed across Mission Rd, December 1964 Photo: Ray Legrue

## Harbor Lights Festival Kicks Off Holiday Season

In late December Kodiak Maritime Museum hosted the first of what the museum hopes will be an annual event- “The Kodiak Harbor Lights Festival.”

Inspired by the Christmas Lights Boat Parade of past years, the museum invited boat owners to decorate their boats with Christmas lights for the holiday season, and to compete for prizes. More than 30 boats participated.

Several hundred residents and visitors thronged the harbor floats in the early evening of December 21st, admiring the boats and spreading holiday cheer among boat owners and their families, crewmembers, and fellow Kodiakans.

KMM board members and volunteers also served apple cider and hot drinks in the Harbormaster building, with Christmas music provided by the Island Bells hand bell choir and the St. Innocent’s Academy voice choir.

KMM intends to host the festival again in December 2014.

## KMM Teams With Amazon on Donation Program

KMM recently signed on to an online donation program instituted by Amazon.com, which costs customers nothing, but donates funding to the museum.

When Amazon.com customers sign up and make purchases through the Amazon Smile program, Amazon will donate .05% of the purchase price of Amazon Smile transactions to KMM. Customers pay nothing. KMM is hoping many of its members will consider participating in the program to support the museum’s programs.



The crew of the F/V Glacier Bay strings lights on their boat

### WHITE DINNER WINES

Fine white wines are especially enjoyable with dishes of light character – seafoods, fowl, white meats, omelets, creamed foods. Served chilled.

	TENTH	FIFTH
CHABLIS, Paul Masson . . . . .	4.00	7.50
Extra delicate, crisp, delicious		
RHINE CASTLE, Paul Masson . . . . .	4.00	7.50
Light, with delicate natural sweetness		
HERALD DRY, Paul Masson . . . . .	4.00	7.50
Delectably dry, lovely bouquet, unique		
LIEBFRAUMLICH, Blue Nun . . . . .	4.50	9.00
(Germany) Soft, velvety, and full-bodied		

### RED DINNER WINES

The perfect complement to red meats, game, cheese and other hearty dishes. Served at room temperature.

BURGUNDY, Paul Masson . . . . .	4.00	7.50
Full-bodied, dry, smooth, mellow		
PINOT NOIR, Paul Masson . . . . .	4.00	7.50
Velvety, dry, from rare Pinot Noir grapes		

Beachcombers Bar Wine List, 1972  
KMM Archives: Doanted by Geno Leech

## *Thelma C* Prints Go on Sale



*The "Thelma C," by C. Allen Johnson*

Prints of a fine art painting of the *Thelma C* will go on sale at Comfish 2014, beginning April 17 in Kodiak. The watercolor painting of the *Thelma C*, by painter and sculptor C. Alan "Bud," Johnson, depicts the boat underway in stormy weather. The prints are produced using the Giclee printing process.

Proceeds from the sales will be used to help fund a protective pavilion to display the boat as an interpretive display in Kodiak. Kodiak Maritime Museum will sell the prints for \$150.00 each. Contact 486-0384 or [toby@kodiakmaritimemuseum.org](mailto:toby@kodiakmaritimemuseum.org), to buy a print or for more information.

The *Thelma C* was built in 1965 by Ken Christoffersen to replace a boat destroyed in the 1964 tsunami in Valdez. Donated to KMM in 2006 by its last owner, Mark Thomas, the *Thelma C* was rebuilt by the museum in 2012. The museum hopes to install the refurbished vessel as an interpretive exhibit near the Kodiak small boat harbor in early 2015.

From a summer-long trip to the Alaskan village of Point Hope in 1960 with his wife and children, Mr. Johnson gained the inspiration for his paintings of boats and sculptures of Alaska natives engaged in traditional activities. He worked from his Puget Sound studio from the 1960s until his death in 2013.

Mr. Johnson's interest in the *Thelma C* came through his son Brian, who arrived in Kodiak in the 1970s, and who owned and fished salmon with the *Thelma C* around Kodiak in the 1980s and 1990s. Mr. Johnson spent many days on the boat around Kodiak Island. His son Brian was also the lead shipwright as the boat was restored and rebuilt by Kodiak Maritime Museum in 2012.

In 2011, Mr. Johnson and his wife Suzanne had 150 prints made of the original painting, using the Giclee printing process, and because of their son's connection to the boat, donated 100 prints to Kodiak Maritime Museum. The numbered prints are mounted on foam board and come with certificates of authenticity signed by Mr. Johnson.

## Former *Thelma C* Crewman Contacts KMM With Greenhorn Story

*The following is an email KMM recently received from Mark Natuzzi, who lives in Nice, France.*

Dear Kodiak Maritime Museum:

I worked on the *Thelma C*, in 1973. I was a 21 year old kid from Pawling, New York, a small town outside of New York City. I landed the *Thelma C* job interview through my pal Tommy Tucker, who asked me "Mark, what are you going say to Kenny? (Owner and skipper Ken Christoffersen) I heard he's tough- a former boxer."

I said, "Well that depends."

Tommy brought me on board and the first thing that came of my mouth was "Throw me overboard if I can't hack it!" Delbert Ferry, the other deckhand, had a baseball bat in his hand and he said "You betcha kid!"

Kenny was pretty savvy- he checked to see if I was carrying a pistol before I came aboard. I told him all I had was a few clothes and a pocket American Bible.

Kenny, Delbert and I went fishing for halibut because the salmon season didn't open or it was thin pickings, I can't recall. I was the bait man using herring that I snapped on. We fished first east of Afognak Island and then went over to Shelikof Strait. Despite the long hours and back breaking work it was a dream come true denied to many. I recall that it rained and we had to pinch some gas by a cannery at Port. Lions. In the middle of the trip I was almost dragged into sea when the lead line almost caught the engine belt. We caught around three thousand pounds, but after we dropped off the catch at the BB Cannery I was let go. They told me they needed someone with more experience. The last time I saw Kenny was in a bar. He bought me a drink and said repeatedly "You got guts!"

I'll never forgot the experience with Del and Kenny; especially watching Del hitting a home run with an unruly halibut.

I now live in Nice, France where I've been for the last 24 years to be near my three adult children.

Like everything, life is a mystery. Why check on Google for the *Thelma C* on April Fools Day? For no reason, only to discover *Thelma C* is in a Kodiak museum, and the only one left of her kind! I read the articles and saw the YouTube footage and then walked over to the new park by Place Massena here in Nice, and there saw a hundred silver, flying-fish in the air. It was like a dream! I believe God is in the stay-on-line business and why not? As my buddy in Monte Carlo said once, "Mark if you really want to make God laugh, make plans!"

All the best to everyone and all the great work of Brian Johnson, Mark Thomas, and the Kodiak College volunteers. You made this very young sixty two year old man's dream a cherished reality. I hope to visit Kodiak soon.

Sincerely Yours- Mark Natuzzi

## Membership

The KMM Board extends a sincere thanks to all of our new and renewing members for 2014. Your support is truly appreciated!

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Margaret Hall

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# Kodiak Maritime Museum

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Exp. Date \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_

*Join or renew at [www.kodiakmaritimemuseum.org](http://www.kodiakmaritimemuseum.org)*

*Kodiak Maritime Museum is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization*

### ***Please begin or renew my membership:***

- Supporter \$25.00
- Deckhand \$50.00
- Skipper \$100.00
- Mariner \$250.00
- Highliner \$500.00
- Legend \$1,000.00
- Family/ Crew \$40.00
- Senior \$15.00

### **Kodiak Maritime Museum**

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