

WORKING WATERFRONT FESTIVAL PRESS RELEASE



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SHELLFISHERMEN TO BE FOCUS OF MARCH AHA PROGRAM Working Waterfront Festival presents RI Folklorist Michael Bell

New Bedford, MA, March 6, 2008—On Thursday, March 13th at 7:30 PM, the Working Waterfront Festival will present Rhode Island folklorist Michael Bell who will give an illustrated talk about the shellfishermen of Narragansett Bay. Rhode Island shellfishermen provide the nation with nearly twenty-five percent of its supply of littlenecks, cherrystones, and quahogs. In 2001 this was equal to more than three million pounds of shellfish with a value of more than \$13 million dollars. In fact since 1988, the quahog has been Rhode Island's official state shell. While many of us have enjoyed stuffed quahogs, clam chowder and littlenecks, the average person knows little about how the shellfish are harvested or about the daily lives of those who do the harvesting. To learn about this fascinating industry, please join us on March 13th. Mr. Bell's talk is an outgrowth of research he did to create a traveling exhibit about the occupational folklife of the Narragansett Bay Shellfishery called "From Bullrakes to Clambakes" in 2002.

The **Working Waterfront Festival** committee became an official AHA partner in January 2008 presenting free monthly programs related to the history and culture of commercial fishing and the working port. Programs are presented at the Seaman's Bethel on the second Thursday of each month as part of AHA, New Bedford's monthly arts and culture night. Like the annual festival, these monthly programs offer attendees a variety of ways to learn about the working waterfront including film screenings, panel discussions, musical performances, author readings, occupational demonstrations and hands-on workshops. Programs are presented free of charge between 5PM and 9PM in the "Saltbox" on the lower level of the Seaman's Bethel. Exact times vary from one month to the next and will be listed on the AHA schedule.

The **Working Waterfront Festival** is a project of the **Community Economic Development Center of Southeastern MA**, a non-profit organization. This free family friendly, festival is a celebration of New England's commercial fishing industry, featuring live maritime and ethnic music, fishermen's contests, fresh seafood, vessel tours, author readings, cooking demonstrations, kid's activities and more. It all takes place in New Bedford, MA, America's #1 fishing port, on the fourth full weekend of September. Navigate to us at www.workingwaterfrontfestival.org.