

**WORKING WATERFRONT FESTIVAL
PRESS RELEASE**



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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FESTIVAL PERFORMERS IN AREA SCHOOLS

Area Students to experience fisherpoetry, African American work songs and Norwegian folk dance

New Bedford, MA, September 19, 2008— On Friday, September 26th, students in area schools will be treated to a sneak preview of the 2008 Working Waterfront Festival as festival performers from Kodiak, Alaska, southwest Norway and Northern Neck, Virginia share fisherpoetry, folk dance and work songs.

Students at New Bedford’s Hannigan Elementary School and Roosevelt Middle School will have a rare opportunity to hear authentic worksongs performed by **The Northern Neck Chantey Singers** a group of retired menhaden fishermen who keep their unique tradition of African-American work songs alive. **The Northern Neck Chantey Singers** is comprised of seven men in their late 60s, 70s and early 80s who fished for menhaden in waters from the Chesapeake Bay to the Atlantic Ocean from the 1930s to the 1980s. Work songs such as “Help Me to Raise ‘Em” were an integral part of coordinating the hauling of the purse seine (nets filled with thousands of pounds of fish).

Students at Fairhaven’s Wood School will experience a program of traditional Norwegian folk dance and music presented by 16 dancers and 6 musicians visiting the festival from southwest Norway. Fairhaven has a large Norwegian-American community and many students have families with direct ties to the scalloping industry.

Fishermen who write poetry, prose and original songs about their lives will perform for students at New Bedford’s Global Learning Charter Public School. The program features fisherpoets Dave and Pat Densmore of Kodiak, Alaska; Janice Marshall of Smith Island, Maryland who writes parodies about her crabbing community and singer/songwriter Jon Campbell of Rhode Island

“We are pleased to offer these programs to school children as another way of connecting our community with the working port. With performers coming from as far away as Alaska and Norway, this represents an exciting and unique opportunity for students and teachers,” says Festival Director Laura Orleans.

The **Working Waterfront Festival** is a project of the **Community Economic Development Center of Southeastern MA**, a non-profit organization. The FREE festival, a family friendly, educational celebration of New England's commercial fishing industry, features 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.

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