



January 22, 2012
2012 Guestletter
Bunny Clark, Corp.

Dear Guests:

Welcome to my review of the 2011 **Bunny Clark** fishing season and our plan for the season of 2012.

We had a good year for weather last year. Not the windfall weather year we had the year before (the 2010 season) where I witnessed the calmest full fishing season I have ever seen. But last year was very similar to the season before as soon as we reached the middle of June. During the 2010 fishing season, the wool pants came off in April. The wool pants remained until June last year. And April was not an “advertising spring” as it was in 2010. No, April was rough and windy, nothing I would suggest to repeat. [On one of these rough April marathon trips **Jared Keniston** and I found ourselves splayed out spread eagle on the canopy top after the 250 pound life raft canister had come loose from its bracket cradle. We were both on our stomachs, the boat on anchor, as ten foot chops threatened to remove us to a much colder place. I looked at **Jared** and said; “What are we doing out here?” Indeed!] May was less so but still colder than normal and windy as well. From June until November, the weather was a duplicate, wind wise, of the year we had before. And it was warmer than normal right through the fall, just not quite as warm as it was in 2010.

The fishing was different from 2010 as well. We never did see the big rush of haddock that we saw in 2010. And, as you might remember, we saw the largest haddock I had ever seen in the spring of 2010. Not so in 2011. Our haddock were much smaller in average size and much less plentiful. We never did land a haddock over 8 pounds whereas the year before we landed eight fish over 10 pounds, a boat record, and many over 8 pounds. But because April was rough, it was a hard time to hook haddock and keep them on the line. Plus, rough weather is not conducive for looking around to find new fishing areas.

The pollock showed up earlier than normal and earlier than the year before, during April. The pollock were available to catch right straight through until the last day of the season,

a first in all the years we have been running the **Bunny Clark**. We had an excellent year for numbers of pollock. Or to put it another way, pollock availability was as good as it gets for a party/charter vessel taking anglers fishing. We also saw more cod earlier and later in the spring than many previous years. The average size of the legal cod was larger in April and May than many previous years. Plus, the cod stayed longer on the edges of bottom before moving inside to spawn. As a result we had good cod fishing all April, May and the first part of June. June was a normal cod month (as compared to the last ten years) for quantity but not as good for size as it normally is. We did not see as many cod in the summer and fall as we normally see. But, in fairness to the cod, we didn't see many herring during that time period either. In fact, we observed the least number of herring schools ever during a full season with the **Bunny Clark**.

We saw a decided increase in four fish species this year. We caught ten halibut, two of which we kept. This is the largest number of halibut I have seen caught on a party boat since 1979 on my first boat, the **Mary E**, where we caught twenty-four. Since 1979, I have seen no more than five or six in a season. And we found halibut everywhere, not just in one "sweet spot", which sometimes happens to more fortunate fishermen. We also saw more wolffish than the last three previous seasons by thirty to almost forty-six percent as compared by year. This was about seventeen percent less than the number that was caught in 2008.

The dogfish were more prevalent than I can remember. They showed up about the same time as they normally do, late June. But they stayed completely through the season on every major bank we fish and on the inside bottom. This is very unusual as, typically, the dogfish move inside to whelp their pups during the summer months, move offshore late summer and off the grounds in the fall. I feel this large biomass of dogfish went a long way toward displacing the herring (although the mid-water herring trawlers are doing the most damage in this regard) which also moved the cod – out of our normal fishing area. Dogfish, of course, are the bane of the party boat captain, creating tangles, biting anglers and "spining" them, turning a pleasant day on the ocean into a sometimes frustrating experience. We also found them to be eating the small juvenile cod on certain banks. **Gary Mills** (NY) took the cake last year for the largest number of hooked dogfish during a single trip with a total count of twenty-nine on September 12, 2011. Thanks, **Gary**!

Whether it was the warmer than normal ocean water temperature or a population shift for other reasons, we saw many more blue sharks than we have seen for years. One or two can be fun but when you have so many around the boat that you can't keep a jig on the line, they become expensive. The boat record for jigs lost to blue sharks is a figure of 67. That happened over fifteen years ago. We didn't best that mark last season. However, on September 1, 2011, the **Sweenor Charter**, during a marathon fishing trip, lost just over 40 jigs to blue sharks, the season record last year. On that same day, **Pat Sweenor** (NY) broke one of our jig sticks in half on a blue shark because the shark was just too big and too fast to get the drag loosened on the reel quick enough. It happens.

We saw a slight increase in the number of white hake we usually catch in a season. It should be noted that we also saw an increase in hake the two years before as well. We

had three individual fish that were much larger than is normal with this species. Cusk landings remained about the same.

We saw mackerel all season long, inshore mostly but offshore as well. This is very unusual as, usually, the bluefish show up and drive the mackerel off. We never did hear of a bluefish being caught.

We made several improvements during the winter of 2010-11 that benefited us greatly during the 2011 **Bunny Clark** fishing season. The most obvious was the addition of the sea anchor used as a fishing tool. I had tried sea anchors in the past but it wasn't until this year that we were able to try the new innovative style sea anchor that was developed a few years ago. Much has improved in twenty-five years! We used a **Para-Tech** twenty-four foot wide (when deployed) parachute look-a-like sea anchor. It did not allow us to catch fish all the time. In fact, even though most times (with wind) it slowed the boat down so the fishing lines tended properly, it hindered landings. And many times, a drift that seemed too fast would yield many more fish than being comfortable with the sea anchor. However, there were exactly twenty-one trips where we would not have caught many, if any, legal fish had it not been for the sea anchor. And all twenty-one trips were excellent trips, one of which yielded some of our biggest cod and another, our biggest pollock. And certain trips it did help us more than if we didn't have it. We just had to be careful not to be tempted to use it all the time.

Kay Moulton from **Surfland Bait & Tackle**, Newbury, Massachusetts found us a new production jig stick that we were able to use immediately to replace lost or broken rods. It is made by **Lamiglas Company** in Washington State and uses the same blank we have used on our **Surfland** series jig sticks. I liked the rod so much; I bought my son, **Micah**, one for his seventeenth birthday. On his first day using it, he caught the largest fish of his life, a 47 pound Maine State trophy white hake, one pound over the existing **IGFA** all tackle world record and, at the time, a tie for the fourth largest hake the **Bunny Clark** had seen since 1986 (later in the year we caught one hake that was larger). Coincidence? Mostly likely. But **Micah** continued to do exceptionally well for the rest of the season with this rod. Most anglers who used it thought that it was an exceptional jig stick for use in all depths of water. I agree. Incidentally, **Mike Horwitz** (NH) turned me on to this blank a few years ago, which led me to have the series built by **Surfland** to use on a regular basis. This new rod just makes it easier to get this blank aboard and in use quickly just by having it shipped to the east coast. I have ordered six new rods to be used this coming season.

We also use the custom jigs sticks built for us by **Saco Bay Tackle Company** in Saco, Maine. Many of our regular anglers ask to use these rods by name.

As far as the other improvements and how they fared, all turned out well. The new stainless cockpit hand rail proved to be much more durable than the previous aluminum one. The new cockpit combing, made from a species of rot resistant mahogany, held paint better than the white oak combing of yesteryear. And the new bunk cushions improved life in the forecastle.

I met with **John** and **Elsa** last year, the people who took over making the **Lavjigs** from **Dennis LaValley**. We used these newer **Lavjigs** and had good success with them last season. I thought, initially, that we would be seeing an inferior jig when production went through a new company. I was wrong. The jigs are very well made and there are more varieties available as well. Unless I find a better jig, they will be our number one source for the future. They can be reached by going to their website at www.lavjigs.net or by emailing John at johnfishon@comcast.net. Their chrome jigs are excellent.

This season, aside from installing a new satellite phone system (to replace the older much less reliable system in the boat now), improvements will be the same improvements or repairs we do every year. These improvements/repairs center around the hull integrity, cosmetics (ease of cleaning), engine and engine room and electronics. There will be no new fishing production related improvements for the 2012 Bunny Clark fishing season.

Our website at <http://www.bunnyclark.com> continues to be the location where you can get information about the **Bunny Clark** operation on a daily basis during the season and off-season. We have a schedule and rates section, a photo section, a world records section and more. Our fishing update section provides anglers with up to date information on the daily catch, fish sizes, daily weather, angler deeds and fishery management information. This **Guestletter** resides on our web site along with some of my previous **Guestletters**. Although I can't personally answer all the e-mail that comes in associated with the site, our staff does a great job with this while also answering reservation questions and scheduling fishing dates. We are still not planning to use the e-mail as a direct source of making reservations as the phone serves as a better means to take care of anyone on an equal basis.

My tagging program was put on the back burner last season. In the back of my mind, I had planned to have more tags made (even though I still have some to use up) but I never got to it. A few anglers did ask if their cod could be tagged (these were legal sized fish that they were going to release anyway) but, the times I was asked, I was too busy to fill their request.

We had quite a few legal cod that were released back to the ocean alive. But this number was probably the smallest number we have had in years. And I wouldn't want to speculate on a figure. The largest cod released back to the ocean alive was a 27.5 pound Maine State trophy caught by **Jack Garvey** (MA) and released on May 17, 2011. I released a 20 pound cod only two days later, a fish that I caught jigging after losing a monster only five minutes earlier. Most of the legal cod released this year ranged from 5 to 10 pounds.

We caught no Maine state or world record fish last year. We came closest with the 48 pound Maine state trophy white hake that **Joe O'Rourke** (NY) caught in early September. The existing **IGFA (International Game Fish Association)** all tackle world record for the white hake at this time is 46 pounds registered on shore weight and caught initially as a 51 pounder by **John Audet** (ME) on the **Bunny Clark** in the fall of 1986.

We felt that we needed a slightly larger fish in order to break or tie the world record. Hake lose more than a pound even in a short period of time to consider getting the fish to a registered scale on land before it lost even more. As we use an exceptionally accurate scale, it can be said that initially **Joe** had a world record hake. **Joe's** hake is the second largest of its species we have seen on the **Bunny Clark** since 1986. The largest one we have ever seen was a 63 pounder caught by **Robert Jorgensen** (ME) in 1983.

Unofficially, there were two other hake that were caught that tied or bested the world record at the time the fish was hoisted out of the water. **Brian Lewer** (FL) caught a 46 pound Maine State trophy white hake in July, our third largest hake of the year. And **Micah Tower** (ME) caught a (previously mentioned) 47 pound Maine State trophy white hake in June, the **Bunny Clark's** second largest hake of the season.

You can check out all of our current and past world and state records by accessing the records link at <http://www.bunnyclark.com> or by going directly to <http://www.bunnyclark.com/records.htm>.

At the time of this writing, the new recreational fishing regulations for the 2012 fishing season (the fiscal calendar year starts May 1st) are very similar to last season's with one exception (haddock). We expect some big changes for the upcoming season, particularly as it relates to the cod, the season for catching cod, the minimum size and the bag limit. We will not know what these new regulations will be until at least February.

As the rules exist now, we have a 24 inch minimum length limit on cod, a 12 inch minimum size on winter (blackback) flounder, a 19 inch limit on pollock, a 19 inch limit on haddock (an increase of an inch from the 2011 fishing season – this minimum size increase went into effect on January 6, 2012), a 9 inch limit on redfish and a 41 inch limit on halibut. Halibut landings are limited to one halibut per vessel per day federally, state wise we are limited to five halibut per calendar year (Maine only). There is also a possession limit on haddock of nine (9) fish per person. There is no limit on hake and cusk. There is also a ten fish bag limit on cod and a seasonal closure for cod possession from November 1st until April 16, 2011. Regulated fish can be filleted at sea and skinned as long as you leave at least "2 square inches of contiguous skin that allows for identification of fish species". Non-regulated species like hake, cusk and ocean pout can be filleted and skinned completely – at least this was the intent of the **New England Fishery Management Council's** ruling. There is a prohibition on the possession of wolffish (We release them back to the ocean alive).

As I feel that the greatest achievement in angling is the ability of a person to hook and land a trophy fish on their own, I have listed the guests who caught the top five (or seven, with the redfish) largest of each significant species during the 2011 fishing season. Keep in mind that all the represented weights of these fish were taken aboard the **Bunny Clark** using a registered scale shortly after capture (the same way it has been done since our first fishing trip on the **Bunny Clark** in May 1983). I feel that this is the fairest comparison between the angler's fish since weight loss is proportional to the amount of

time the fish is out of water. This also makes all our big fish comparable through all the seasons since the Bunny Clark was launched.

Angler (state)	Species	Weight (lbs.)
1. Liam Kennedy (NJ)	Cod	47.5
2. Travis Manning (NC)	Cod	45
3. Andy Chornobil (NY)	Cod	44.5
4. Ed Jeter (MA)	Cod	44
5. Liam Kennedy (NJ)	Cod	40.5
6. Dan Kelley (ME)	Cusk	23
7. Ray Westermann (MA)	Cusk	22
8. Dick Lyle (PA)	Cusk	18
9. David MacDonald (MA)	Cusk	18
10. Bryan Lewer (FL)	Cusk	16.25
11. Jim Bradley (VT)	Haddock	8
12. Eric Pysar (NY)	Haddock	8
13. Amy Finocchiaro (MA)	Haddock	7.5
14. Craig Trombley (NY)	Haddock	7.5
15. Jon Griffin (MA)	Haddock	7.25
16. Joe O'Rourke (NY)	White Hake	48
17. Micah Tower (ME)	White Hake	47
18. Bryan Lewer (FL)	White Hake	46
19. Shawn Rosenberger (PA)	White Hake	45.5
20. Dan Kelley (ME)	White Hake	42
21. Jack Meholic (PA)	Monkfish	23.5
22. Don Stancil (PA)	Pollock	25.5
23. Ken McLaughlin (ME)	Pollock	24
24. Dennis Morton (NY)	Pollock	24
25. Jason Kenyon (NY)	Pollock	24
26. Bob Williams (NY)	Pollock	23.5
27. Dana Decormier (NH)	Redfish*	2.75
28. Micah Tower (ME)	Redfish*	2.5
29. Andy Chornobil (NY)	Redfish	2.5
30. John Risko (NY)	Redfish	2.4
31. Micah Tower (ME)	Redfish*	2.1
32. Dana Decormier (NH)	Redfish*	2.1
33. Dana Decormier (NH)	Redfish*	2.0
34. Joe O'Rourke (NY)	Wolffish***	19.5
35. Bill Lewis (MA)	Wolffish***	18
36. Ron Worley (NY)	Wolffish***	18
37. Steve Wiater (MA)	Wolffish***	17.5
38. Mark Robinson (MA)	Wolffish***	17.5
39. Dave Gray (VT)	Halibut	35
40. Andrew Gaudio (CT)	Halibut	24
41. Ian Keniston (ME)	Halibut**	12
42. John Cooker (OH)	Halibut**	7

43. Peter Grant (ME)	Halibut**	6
44. Steve LaPlante (CT)	Torpedo Ray	90
45. Jason Ridolfi (NY)	Barndoor Skate	25.5

Where there is a tie in fish size, anglers are arranged in order of the date caught. Earlier catches are placed first.

* These redfish, although caught with **Bunny Clark, Corp.**, were caught on the **Petrel**, our lobster boat, with **Tim Tower** as captain on January 1, 2011. All the redfish posted in this trophy list represent every trophy redfish that was caught for **Bunny Clark, Corp.** during the 2011 fishing year. Only two trophy redfish were actually caught on the **Bunny Clark** in 2011.

** These halibut were sub-legal and released back to the ocean alive.

*** Federal regulation prohibits the retention of wolffish. All five of these wolffish were released back to the ocean alive.

Dana Decormier and **Micah Tower** appeared the most in the top five season trophy list with three fish each. However, both caught some of these trophy fish on the **Petrel** (**Dana** caught three redfish & **Micah** caught his two redfish) on January 1, 2011. In fact, **Dana** didn't catch a single trophy fish on the **Bunny Clark** last season. He might have landed a 300 pound porbeagle shark that same day on the **Petrel** had he remembered to bring his "man card". There were five anglers who caught two trophy fish each in the top five last year. Those anglers included **Joe O'Rourke**, **Andy Chornobil**, **Bryan Lewer**, **Dan Kelley** and **Liam Kennedy**. • **Liam Kennedy** caught his two big cod on the same day. In fact he caught four trophy cod that day. The other two weighed 33 pounds and 27 pounds. • **Ty Kashmiry (ME)** lost the largest haddock of the season on May 11, 2011 when he tried to lift his 8+ pound haddock over the rail without the help of a gaff. • It should be noted that our first shark attack of the season took place on July 19, 2011. The attack was on a cusk hooked and fought by **Dave Gray** (who, incidentally, caught our biggest halibut the same day). **Dave** only ended up with the head of a cusk to show for his efforts (the shark biting off the rest of the fish behind the gills). However, the head alone weighed 11 pounds! Had it been whole, there is no doubt in my mind that the fish would have been our biggest cusk, weighing well over 30 pounds. It was certainly the largest cusk head aboard and that was comparing this head to the head of **Dan Kelley's** cusk of 23 pounds, caught within the same hour! • As mentioned previously, **Joe O'Rourke**, **Micah Tower** and **Bryan Lewer** all beat or tied the existing white hake world record at the time of boating their respective fish. • **Jack Meholic's** monkfish was the only monkfish caught weighing over 6 pounds last season. • We only had three viable opportunities to boat a bluefin tuna last season. **Fred Kunz (NH)** might have had the best opportunity with a small fish (under 100 pounds) had the fish not taken a swing around the bow and involved everybody else's line up there. **Dave Gray** and **Jeff Thayer (MA)** both hooked tuna of 300 plus pounds where the fight lasted over three hours each. We got a good look at both fish but never got either tuna close enough to gaff or harpoon. • **Dave Gray's** halibut is only the third largest halibut ever caught on the **Bunny Clark** since her launching date in May of 1983. **Ian's** 12 pound halibut was the first halibut he has ever caught. • **Steve LaPlante** caught the second largest torpedo ray in **Bunny Clark** history. The largest was a 99 pounder caught by **Larry Masterson**

(VT) some fifteen years ago. • Of the three barndoor skates that the **Bunny Clark** has seen landed on her decks, **Jason Ridolfi's** is the second largest all time. • **Joe O'Rourke** had a very lucky year as he landed the largest fish he has ever caught, the big hake, and the only wolffish he has ever seen. I was in the bow waiting with a gaff at the time he was reeling in the **Bunny Clark's** largest wolffish of the year. When the fish hit the surface **Joe** said; "What is that?" (this made me laugh) I don't think he thought I even wanted it in the boat. And trying to hold it for a picture with that large jaw and big teeth waiting to bite; it was a very fun experience. [note: I did not gaff **Joe's** wolffish as it was released back alive but I did stay with the gaff until I realized what he had on his line.]

Before I end this **Guestletter**, I want to cite those anglers and experiences of note that deserve an honorable mention for their uniqueness and/or fishing prowess during the 2011 **Bunny Clark** fishing season. I realize that this is a value judgment on my part but I believe that my conclusions are recognized as a popular opinion and/or statistical fact among my crew and fishing guests and are based on many fishing trips. These special anglers and incidents are as follows:

Fisherman of the Year (FY-'11): **Bryan Lewer** (FL) walks away with this award. At nineteen (19) years old, he is the youngest angler (by far) to ever win this award. There was no other angler even close; relinquishing the need to add comparative value points (CVPs) in order to come to a salient decision. (CVPs – points added or subtracted between two anglers who end the year at the top end with 30 points or less separating them. Points are only adjusted on those days where both were fishing together.) **Bryan** came in at third place in this category last year and in fourth place the year before.

As most of you know by now, the **FY** award is based on a point system that relates to specific achievements during a trip and during the year. Each achievement is worth a set of points. The individual with the most points at the end of the season wins. In order to compete in this category, you have to have paid for and completed at least 10 different trips on the **Bunny Clark**. I have had many excellent anglers who fish with us on a regular basis every season, any one of whom has the potential to become the **Fisherman of the Year**. **Bryan** was consistently the best or one of the best anglers last season. His strengths in this category included the most trophy fish of the season, his penchant for being high hook on almost every trip he attended, his ability to land particularly large fish as compared to his fellow anglers, his competitive spirit, his belief in himself and ability to adapt to any fishing situation. He was very fun to have on the boat and excited with every fish he caught. His enthusiasm was contagious and it affected everyone around him. It was a great trip when **Bryan** was aboard. As a captain it helped me do a better job for him and those fishing on the day that **Bryan** chose to go. Congratulations, **Bryan**. I am honored that you chose to spend most of your fishing time with us.

Bryan's total point count was 309, more than double the point total that he accrued last season. **Shawn Rosenberger** (PA) took second place with a point total of 151. **Steve LaPlante** came in third with 98 points. **Tim Williams** (CT) was fourth with 93 points. And **Ray Westermann** (MA) was fifth with 82 points. Incidentally, **Micah Tower** would have come in at third place with 122 points had he qualified to go for this award.

Female Angler of the Year: There was no one who met the criteria to make a run at the female angler of the year award last year. We had many who were capable of it including **Marian “Merv” Murphy** (NH), **Gloria Gennari** (MA), **Rebecca Hammer** (NH), **Allyson Fuehrer** (ME) and **Linda Paul** (ME), to name just a few right off the top of my head. But no individual had the required time in order to compete.

Best Bait Fisherman: **Shameless Ray “The Pole Tossing Master Baiter” Westermann** (MA) landed this award again last year. There was no one close. This is the fourth year in a row that he has won this title. **Ray** didn’t do anything extraordinary as he did in the previous three wins. But then, how do you catch the number or size of the haddock he has caught in previous years when we don’t find as many haddock for him to catch? And how do you catch a world record sized hake every year? I think **Ray** just took a deep breath and held back knowing that his biggest competition was actually himself! **Ray** was our fifth best angler overall this year. And he likes to fish bait. Enough said.

Most Aces: For those who don’t know, an angler scores an ace when he or she lands the three (or more) largest fish during a single trip. There can be no ties in fish size with other anglers in order to achieve true “ace” status. There were two anglers who qualified for an ace and one who qualified for a double ace (four largest fish) last season. **Steve LaPlante** was the first and had the best one, the double. On April 20, 2011, **Steve** was fishing on the bow casting off the starboard side (normally he fishes on the port side) casting a jig and getting a fish a cast. Others were catching fish but not with the frequency that **Steve** was catching them. Plus, his fish, cod mostly, were all of very good size. His four largest fish that day, a marathon trip, included a 34.5 pound Maine State trophy cod, a 14 pound cod, an 11 pound cod and a 10 pound cod. He was high hook by far that day and he released three legal cod back to the ocean alive. **Liam Kennedy** (NJ) was the second angler to land an ace, also on a marathon trip, on May 19, 2011. **Liam’s** three fish, as you might know if you have read what I wrote previously, included a 47.5 pound Maine State trophy cod, the largest cod of the season, a 40.5 pound Maine state trophy cod, the fifth largest cod of the season and a 33 pound Maine state trophy cod, the tenth largest cod of the **Bunny Clark** season, all in one day! His two largest cod remain the two largest cod that **Liam** has ever caught. June 10, 2011, the extreme day trip, was **Mike Graham’s** (MA) day. His three fishing included a 17 pound cod, a 16.5 pound cod and a 13 pound pollock.

Most Trophy Fish (including hake over 15 pounds, cod & pollock over 20 pounds and monkfish over 15 pounds) of the Season: **Bryan Lewer** caught the most with a count of thirty-three. **Shawn Rosenberger** was second with a count of twenty-four. **Micah Tower** was third with twenty counters. **Ray Westermann** was fourth with seventeen. And **Tim Williams** was fifth with sixteen.

Most Trophy Fish during a Trip: **Tim Williams** caught the most trophies for a single trip with a count of eight. For second place, **Dave Gray** and **Shawn Rosenberger** tied with six trophy fish each. For third place, **Shawn Rosenberger**, **Liam Kennedy**, **Ray Westerman**, **Steve LaPlante**, **Fred Kunz** and **Bryan Lewer** (twice) shared five counters

each. For fourth place **Shawn Rosenberger** (twice), **Micah Tower**, **David MacDonald**, **Dick Lyle**, **Steve LaPlante**, **Yoshito Umaoka**, **Don Stancil** (PA), **Neil Feldman** (NJ), **Jon Griffin**, **Steve Brown** (ME), **Jim Feeney** (MA), **Ted Harris** (PA) and **Bryan Lewer** (twice) caught four counters each. And for fifth place **Alec Levine** (AL), **Micah Tower** (twice), **Jon Griffin**, **Ray Westermann** (three times), **Shawn Rosenberger**, **Dave Gray**, **Bryan Lewer**, **David MacDonald**, **Dana Decormier**, **Craig T. Nugent, Sr.** (NY), **Jason Ridolfi** (NY), **Mark Phelps** (MA), **Yoshito Umaoka**, **Dan Kelley** (twice), **Tom Miller**, **Marcia Sylvester** (NY), **Carlos Shacar** (MA - twice), **Andy Chornobil**, **Fred Kunz** (twice), **Shawn Hanson** (NH), **Bryan Tufts** (ME), **Art Kemler, Jr.** (PA), **Guy Hesketh** (CT), **Steve Selmer** (NH), **David Prior** (VT), **Tim Williams**, **Shane Cassavant** (MA), **Frank Noble** (ME), **Steve Brown** (ME) and **Jon Tesnakis** (NY) caught three trophy fish on a single trip.

Most Pools (largest fish of the trip): **Bryan Lewer** came in first place by catching the largest fish of the trip on five different occasions. **Ken McLaughlin** (ME) landed the second most pools with a count of four. **David MacDonald**, **John Baker** (ME), **Micah Tower**, **Steve LaPlante**, **Steve Winger** (ME), **Chuck Morykan** (NY) and **Ally Fuehrer** (ME) landed the largest fish of the trip two times last season.

High Hook: **Bryan Lewer** was high hook (the most legal fish on a trip) at least twenty-four times that we know of. **Shawn Rosenberger** was second in this category with ten counts that we know of. **Ken McLaughlin** and **Tim Williams** tied for third place with five counts each.

Biggest Double: **Micah Tower** (ME) caught the largest double keeper catch of the season on the July 12, 2011 full day trip. His catch included a 36 pound Maine State trophy white hake and a 21 pound white hake. Not only were both fish caught on the same line at the same time, **Micah** mirrored the **Dan Kelley** move and caught both fish on the same jig! One fish was caught on the treble hook and the other was caught on the tube above it. In most cases, **Micah** does not use a fly. **Carlos Shacar** (MA) caught the second largest double. His catch included a 30.25 pound white hake and a 17.5 pound white hake on the October 31, 2011 marathon trip. **Dennis Morton** (NY) took a close third with a 24 pound pollock and a 23 pound pollock. These two fish were actually caught as part of only the third triple of the season. The third fish was a 12 pound pollock caught on the fly above the jig, on the September 23, 2011 marathon trip. The two bigger pollock were both caught on the jig in similar fashion to the way **Micah** caught his two big hake! **Shawn Rosenberger** was fourth with a 20 pound white hake and a 19.5 pound white hake, on the October 7, 2011 marathon trip. **Mark Flower** (NY) took fifth with a 20.25 pound pollock and an 18 pound pollock. Except for the doubles of **Micah** and **Dennis**, the top twelve double keeper catches of the year were caught with the jig and fly combination.

Hardest Luck: My first choice for the hardest luck of the year would not be losing a **Bunny Clark** jigging stick, of which we lost three, a boat record for one season. It would not be breaking one of my favorite **Bunny Clark** jig sticks, which we did once. It would not even be stabbing myself in my favorite purple boot (they were worth \$120.00 and only two weeks old) with a fillet knife allowing a damp foot all the time in heavy

weather, laying to at the dock for two days with an engine failure, getting hit by a late arriving local tuna boat (just before midnight) with the same name as my first charter boat causing \$7,000.00 worth of damage to the bow pulpit of the **Bunny Clark**, or even an infected thumb that was so bad I missed two marathon trips in a row! No, I would have given all these things a whirl on my own, thrown the un-lost jigs sticks overboard and even broken a rod on the dock in front of everyone, if I could have just weighed that cusk of **Dave Gray's** whole, the one that was hit by the first shark attack on the Ultra. If a couple of jigs sticks would have sufficed, I would have used the other credits to see what that fish was that **Steve LaPlante** lost in deep water in the fall (I just know it was a huge cusk or cod), landed the two bluefins that **Dave Gray** hooked with his jig stick, just gotten a good look at that big cod that **Bryan Lewer** lost at the Lightship or even that big cod that **Steve LaPlante** lost in the same area where **Bryan** lost his; the same place where **Andy Chornobil** caught his 44.5 pound cod. I will soon forget about the jig sticks, the breakdowns and the little problems you get by in life. I'll never forget the fish that were lost. These experiences have taken on a life of their own in my mind associated with the anglers who gave me the great experiences!

Second place in this category would have to go to **Fred Fredberger** (CT), our most improved angler during the 2010 season. **Fred** lost the first of the three jig sticks overboard last year with **Captain Ian** on the first day of cod possession, April 16, 2011. **Fred** didn't mean it and I know that. I probably felt worse for him than I did myself. But the rod he lost was the **Hobbs** rod, a graphite rod I built for **Charlie "C. B." Hobbs** (NY) in the early 90s. In 1994, **C.B.** won the **Bunny Clark FY '94** award. He was the oldest angler to ever win that award at 79 years old. And he took this award from **Fred Kunz**, his closest competitor at the time, with an incident on Platts Bank that I shall never forget. **Charlie** died only a few years after winning the award on the boat. But he was a personal favorite angler of mine. A person who, I felt, thought as I did and won the hearts of anglers around him. Even **Fred Kunz** didn't mind that **Charlie** beat him that year and was gracious in the loss. Every time I saw one of my deck hands pass that rod out, I thought of **Charlie**. Oh, I'll still think of **Charlie** but maybe not quite as much as I would have had we not lost the rod.

Third place has to go to **Rod Wood** (PA) if only so I can recount the story that goes along with his unique experience during the marathon trip of September 23rd. On this foggy day, **Rod**, like everyone else, was involved in a pollock blitz with the biggest pollock we had seen or would see all season. Everyone was excited, calling for gaffs, reeling, tangling lines, with pollock floating around the boat and everyone busy. I was running around like an idiot trying to get everything done or just trying to keep up. As I was running to the bow answering the call of "gaff", I heard **Rod** scream. It was such a horror filled scream that all I could imagine was that someone had gotten a digit caught in a loop of the **Spectra** line and I was going to see a finger or thumb wriggling on the deck and **Rod** holding his bloody hand. Instead, I found bird feathers everywhere around **Rod**. One of the land birds that had hitched a ride with us in the fog early in the trip had gotten its feet caught in the line as **Rod** was reeling in a pollock. **Rod** had actually reeled the bird into his spool. When I got there all that could be seen was the bird's beak and eyes peeking out from an area between the spool and the housing of his reel! **Rod** was

wondering what to do; kill the bird or reel his fish in. In fact, the bird was long gone anyway. I took control and told **Rod** to reel his fish in. We would take care of the remains of the bird afterward. I felt bad for the bird and, of course, so did **Rod**. But the damage had been done well before the scream!

Most Improved Angler: **Dan Merrow** (NH) gets my vote on this one. **Dan** has been fishing with me since **Ian Keniston** started working for me in over twelve years ago. He and **Ray Johnson** (NH) started fishing with us on a regular basis since that time. **Ray** hasn't been fishing with us for the last two years as he has been trying to get over a few health problems. But **Dan** has been as consistent as ever. **Dan** has always been a good fisherman but last year he did exceptionally well. And on one trip, a day trip in July, he was high hook with almost twenty-five percent of all the legal fish landed that day and caught the second largest fish of the trip besides. That one trip was the best trip he has ever had in his life. For this, **Dan** takes the award. Congratulations!

Best Team: For years I have been watching some of my regular anglers from the Connecticut region come up together and fish on the **Bunny Clark**. I noted their presence from the start. This not so much because they are good anglers, which they are. But I really noticed them because of the fierce competition between them and the excellent barbs they have thrown at each other year after year. Last year, particularly their last trip, cemented my resolve to give them this category for the season. They earned it. This most deserving team includes **James Davenport** (CT), **Keith Borkowski** (who now resides in Maine and lives close to **Ian** and **Jared**), **Don Gilbert** (CT) and **Dave Lybass** (CT). I have a great deal of fun watching their antics every time they come out. And, without them, it just wouldn't be as much fun.

Jackass Award: This award given to the person or persons who, during the course of the season, do something so untoward as to be unbelievable unless experienced yourself. So it started when **Dennis & Melissa Smith** confronted me on the dock after a full day trip they had attended and wanted their money back for a trip. After consulting with **Captain Ian** about the trip, I came back and told them that I was sorry I couldn't do that. The crew did nothing wrong, the dogfish were horrible (it was a very unfortunate blitz with this species that day) and it's our most angler filled trip. To give them their money back would be to admit that the crew didn't do the best job they could do. And to give them their money back would also mean that I would have to give money back to everyone. And I couldn't do that either. Some anglers truly enjoyed that trip. We also had regular anglers aboard who realized what it's like on a party boat with dogfish. They understood and came again later in the season.

I thought that was going to be the end of it. I was wrong. I got a full two page email highlighting all the things they thought was wrong on the trip, some incorrect assumptions and quite a few prevarications as well. They warned me that if I didn't give them a refund, they were going to write a number of sources and give many bad reviews on many social media sites. They said; "We do have some video recorded during the trip showing the conditions, and would use this to document the conditions in support of our claims." The email ended with; "We will give you 3 business days to reply (until 7/13/11)

with a suggested resolution before posting reviews or video of our **Bunny Clark** experience online.” They also said that any email reply would be considered fair game for inclusion in their reviews. I sent them an email back a day later repeating what I had told them before, explaining the misconceptions they could have resolved had they directed questions to the captain and crew at the time and encouraged them to do whatever it was they felt they had to do. “Free speech is what makes America great and I, for one, would never try to inhibit that – both good or bad.” I said.

Well they never did contact all the sources they had threatened me with. Nor did they post any videos. They probably didn’t have any. They did put a long note on the **Bunny Clark Facebook** page (of which I have never been on – my daughter put it up but doesn’t maintain it. Things go on that page without my knowledge, I guess, on a daily basis.), they wrote a bad review or two and they said a few things. All for what?

My point is, it was a hurtful unkind and selfish act that could have saved us much time had they researched the different trips we offer, talked to one of our reservationists before they made the reservation and read about us online. The fact that they didn’t try to solve any of their problems while aboard leads me to think that they didn’t want to have them solved in the first place. We did find out that on their honeymoon they went to **Sandals Grande Ocho Rios** (<http://luxuryexcluded.blogspot.com/>) resort in Jamaica. Afterward they wrote a long unkind review about their stay there on line. After reading it, I felt sorry for them. They are probably unhappy with life and truly feel that some businesses are out there trying to take advantage of them. But I also felt that the Internet has allowed a playground where social media predators are free to roam like bulls in a china closet, knocking legitimately good businesses around in the process. I don’t take this kind of thing personally. I can’t afford to. However, these two do make the perfect couple to put in my “annual” under this category. Without the experience, this category would have been left blank! Congratulations, **Dennis & Melissa!**

Exceptional Good Luck: We had a single day of haddock fishing that was our best haddock fishing of the year and one of our best haddock catching days ever. It was also an exceptional cod fishing day on a day where we weren’t allowed to keep cod. It happened on April 11, 2011. It was a marathon with only five anglers aboard (and no other boats in view or on the radio). And I wasn’t really going to run the trip. But the anglers who were going have a history (a great history) with us on the **Bunny Clark** and the weather was going to be good. **Larry Irish** (FL) was the high hook supreme that day, catching more legal sized fish than any other angler on any other trip during the entire 2011 **Bunny Clark** fishing season. He had to have had over seventy legal, most of which were cod that were released alive (over thirty were haddock). **Tom Murphy** (VT) was there as well and caught a total count of forty-three haddock, the sixth most haddock caught by an angler in the history of the **Bunny Clark**. The official haddock count record for a single trip is forty-nine caught by **Justin Morton** (NH) during a full day trip on April 18, 2004. Unofficially, **Ian Keniston** had a day a couple years later where he stopped counting after forty. I know he had over fifty legal haddock that day but I never was able to get an exact count. **Tom** caught his forty-three haddock with two hours to spare. I thought for sure he was going to break the record. And we egged him on in the

process, doing everything we could think of to make him a better haddock fisherman. However, with two hours left, the bite just died. And I could not, for the life of me, find another spot where we could catch haddock. Still this day was an anomaly; the best day of haddock/cod fishing of any day last year. And to think, had I not had such excellent individuals as anglers, I might not have even taken the **Bunny Clark** off the dock! I never would have known what we missed.

Quotes of the Year: “Cruel man, you are!” A mobile phone text from **Willy Goldsmith** (MA – a wonderful angler, writer, biologist & New England fisheries spokesman) who called me on my mobile phone while I was on the deck of **Barnacle Billy’s** restaurant entertaining former **President George H. W. Bush**. I passed the phone to the former **President** and asked if he wouldn’t mind answering the phone. “Of course I wouldn’t mind.” He asked me who was calling. I told him who it was. He answered; “Hello, **Willy**. This is **George Bush**.” Of course, **Willy** thought I was kidding but played along, never realizing who he was really talking to until he hung up, called again and I was able to re-confirm. He was pleasantly embarrassed. I did the same thing to **Fred Kunz** a couple of years ago and wrote about it in a previous **Guestletter**.

“I’m going to the beach!” A quote from **Emily Caouette** (NY) when asked if she was going to go fishing tomorrow after she won the boat pool with a 10 pound pollock on a full day trip on July 7th where almost every fish brought aboard that day was a dogfish. How she ended up getting the pollock through all the dogs is a mystery to me.

“This is like a Roman orgy,” an anonymous angler said after a late August half day trip with lousy weather and many sea sick. “Roman orgy?” **Jared** asked. “Yeah, like the day after.”

“Nothing is going to keep me from fishing!” A quote from **Ken Fowler** (PA) after he drove the point of a treble hook into his finger past the barb. I made the comment that **Ken** was all done after I saw that happen. I had to push the 10/0 hook through the skin and cut the barb off the hook in order to remove it. He did go back to fishing and was high hook for the trip!

“Have a good life!” A quote from an anonymous angler while giving a tip to **Sean Devich** (the deck hand that evening) after getting off the **Bunny Clark** from a particularly unsuccessful half day trip. There was not a single legal sized fish boated that evening. Nor were any dogfish even seen. **Captain Ian** told me later that he had never wished to see a dogfish caught so badly in his life. The fishing has got to be bad if you start wishing for dogfish! And every captain has those (bad days).

Most Unusual Catch: **Willy Goldsmith** (MA) started fishing with us as a young teenager back in 2002. His favorite captain was **Kenton Geer**. **Captain Kenton** would do anything to catch big fish, every minute of every day if he could. **Willy** liked his style and the two became good friends. On June 5, 2003, **Kenton** found a spot where **Willy** landed a 46 pound 1.9 ounce cod and broke the **International Game Fish Association** all tackle world record in the **Junior Angler** category (anglers from 11 to 16 years of

age. **Willy** was fifteen years old at the time. The fish he had to beat was a 43 pound cod caught on the **Bunny Clark** by fourteen year old **Scott Mrazik** (ME) only ten days earlier. **Captain K** was the skipper with **Scott's** fish as well. The next year **Kenton** moved to Hawaii and started fishing out there. He still lives and fishes commercially in Hawaii today. [On January 12, 2012 his first child was born, **Kanyon Fisher Geer** on the big island of Hawaii.] **Willy** left in 2004 as well. Over the years I have kept in touch with both **Willy** and **Kenton**.

Willy had been warning me all last year that he was going to come fishing with us. Finally, on July 26, 2011 he sailed with **Sean Devich** and me on a full day trip. It was a very fun trip and great to see **Willy** where I could talk to him face to face. Fishing right next to **Willy** in the bow pulpit was fifteen year old **Travis Manning** (NC) on his first deep sea fishing trip in Maine. Near the end of the trip he hooked into (and landed) the largest fish of his life, a 45 pound cod. This became the second largest cod of the 2011 **Bunny Clark** fishing season. And it is the largest cod caught by an angler under the age of sixteen years since **Willy** broke the **Junior Angler** world record in June of 2003. Fact is, had **Willy** not broke the world record then, **Travis** would have broken it that day! Talk about coincidences!

Unexplained Phenomena: Who said that to win the FY-'11 you have to talk the good guys off their game? Even if it were true, who would be the best candidate to do such thing, do it with such talent and then win? • Nothing spurns someone to start betting more than the feel of money. Even if it's trying to guess the species of fish the angler has on the line. Well, **Steve Brown** was only one species off! And it was the first day of the season. • **Mel Dupke** (CT) finally called it quits in 2011 after more years than I can count and filling up her dresser drawer with hard luck award t-shirts. • Near the end of June, **Mike Kalwara** (CT) caught a perfectly round rock. It was the type of rock you might go looking for on a pebble/rock beach and never find. I've never seen anything like it! It now resides on my bench at home in the work room. • The year wouldn't be complete without a good **Fred Kunz** story. On a trip in the fall, during the heat of the action, where fish were being caught all around the boat, **Fred** hooked into what he considered a huge fish. Of course, everyone was hooked up. And because it was taking a long time to bring this fish up, various other lines were crossing **Fred's**, tangling him up & slowing him down. Well, as you might imagine, **Fred** lost his fish near the surface. Crying foul, he brought his jig up, cut it off and hurled it overboard (if he wasn't going to see this great fish, he wasn't going to see his jig either). In the meantime, **Fred's** fish floated up to the surface where it was retrieved. It was a hake slightly less than 20 pounds that had been hooked in the side. Does **Fred** regret? "#@&% you, **Tim**." That says it all. • **Wayne Johnson** (NH) graced the **Bunny Clark** with his presence last season and did very well. I took advantage of him a bit last year when he got hung up on bottom with is 80 pound test line. The drift had been too fast but **Wayne** couldn't break his line. Instead, he slowed the boat down just shy of anchor mode, allowing us to catch many more fish. I let it go as long as I could before intervening and breaking his line! • Interesting to note; **Wayne** started fishing with me years ago on a marathon trip where he met the girl of his dreams. They started dating. Three years later on another marathon trip aboard with me and the **Bunny Clark**, **Nellie** proposed to **Wayne**. They got married

afterward. Now, two children later, **Nellie** sends **Wayne** out fishing alone while she stays at home taking care of the kids! • **Mike Hatfield** (NY), one of my best anglers, loses a jig stick overboard? It can't be true. Not **Mike**! • Our own **Jay Smith** (ME) has chartered the **Bunny Clark** for his church group on an August half day trip for five years in a row. **Jay** has never landed a legal fish on these trips despite the fact that some around him have. Well this year he caught his first legal fish, a 4.5 pound cod, the only legal cod caught on the boat that evening. Devine guidance? • We hook up ten bluefins all year long, a low for us. **Dave Gray** hooks two of them, one he fights for three hours and loses near the boat. The other he cries "uncle" before it gets into a long battle. He also catches a cusk that could have been our biggest ever, lands his first legal halibut, catches a bunch of trophy fish with just a few trips and loses some of our largest cod. Is there something special about **Dave**? Of course there is. Always has been. I can say almost exactly the same of **Steve LaPlante**! • **John Provoncha** (VT) sea sick almost the whole day, doesn't stop fishing and still wins the boat pool with the second largest hake he has ever caught. Typical. I don't care what state that man is in, you're gambling your money away if you get in the boat pool with him! • **Andrew Gaudio** (CT), first time on the **Bunny Clark**, learns to cast/fish with a jig stick for the first time and lands a 24 pound halibut, the first halibut he's ever seen! • **Don Stancil** hooks a blue shark, brings it back to the boat like it was nothing, boats the shark, takes a picture and releases it alive. I'm sure **Steve Irwin** (AUS) would have appreciated that! Who wouldn't have given any amount of money to have seen those two on the boat at the same time in that situation? • On the last trip of the season, **Steve Selmer** (NH) hooked three porbeagle sharks (in the morning, late morning and afternoon) and lost all three, a boat record for probeagle hook-ups with a cod rod!

Special Feature: **David Prior** (VT) has been struggling with Multiple Myeloma, a cancer of the blood that affects the bone tissue. He had been treated for this disease without much success until he ran into my deep sea fishing site on line. He was looking for another place to go cod fishing. There he saw the **Jimmy Fund** icon and read about my work with the **Dana-Farber Cancer Institute (DFCI)**. He went fishing with me and we talked about the **DFCI**. **Dave** decided to try it out and was treated about a year and a half ago. At the end of last season, **Dave** was pronounced "cancer free" for the first time since being diagnosed. [Only a few years ago, patients with Multiple Myeloma were given a year to live. Now most are given five. However, even being pronounced cancer free doesn't mean the cancer won't return and, with this particular cancer, it often does. **Dave** knows this but is very upbeat that during this lag time they might find a cure.] To celebrate, **Dave** decided to book a marathon trip with his good friend **Erik Carruth** (VT). That morning he took me aside and said the he would really like to catch a big cod. As luck would have it, he caught the only big cod of the day. It was a 29.25 pound Maine State trophy cod, by far the largest cod he has ever caught. And he caught his largest hake as well. His hake weighed 24.75 pounds, a quarter of a pound shy of a Maine State trophy.

In Memoriam: I lost three of my all time favorite people last year. **Don Somers** (ME) passed away from a heart attack during the middle of March 2011. He was a great fisherman and a wonderful person. He supported me in everything I did (including

gutting 2500 pounds of pollock/cod/cusk on a winter commercial **Petrel** trip – he told me his hands hurt for two weeks after that!) and he took many **Bunny Clark** trips. Honoring a request from his wonderful wife, **Jean**, we spread his ashes from the **Bunny Clark** off Rose Cove over one of my favorite lobstering spots on April 10, 2011 at 5:15 PM.

Next to pass was my **Uncle Wayne Clark**, my mother's most outgoing brothers. Of cancer, that disease I'm so much against, during the middle of May. **Uncle Wayne** taught me how to hunt. He was born in northern Maine, the same as my mother. He had perfected the art of that great Maine humor you so rarely come across. He was good to everyone he ever met and was good at everything he ever did. My only regret is that I didn't spend enough time to take advantage of his good humor. My kids would have benefitted more from having me know him better.

Irwin Libeskind (MA) passed on September 26, 2011. My age exactly, we even graduated from college with the same major. He fished on the **Bunny Clark** from the very early days. He spent less time on the boat when he formed **Cell Sciences**, a clearing house for genetically engineered immunochemicals and hematology reagents for use in life science research. It was a ton of work that kept him away from the boat more than he wanted. We kept in touch regularly via email. He was just getting to the point where he could start enjoying fishing again. And the last two months of his life he spent time driving up to Prince Edward Island chartering boats for stand-up rod/reel tuna trips. It was in PEI before one of these trips he was found dead in his hotel room, taken by a massive heart attack. **Irwin** and I were very good friends. I loved the man.

I will miss these three special people very much. And for all three, had I known, I would have made more time. And you know, you can never be more appreciative of what you have, living in America. We take so much for granted. Until I die, there will always be special things that happen in my life that will remind me of one of these people. And, of course, they were the fun times I hope to always remember.

And speaking of things I love to remember, my crew takes center stage here. I have never relied so much on a crew as I did last year. And I never felt more comfortable or more relaxed knowing that when they were out there they had my and our customer's best interests at heart. I'm talking about **Captain Ian Keniston** and his brother, **Captain Jared Keniston**. During the same time that the **Bunny Clark** is running, I have the added challenge of being the general manager of the two **Barnacle Billy's** restaurants in Perkins Cove (**Barnacle Billy's & Barnacle Billy's, Etc.**). I could not have been the active part of **Barnacle Billy's, Inc.** had I not had **Jared** and **Ian** aboard. **Ian** has become so good at it now that I find myself asking him where to go when I have the boat. Plus, I keep close track of where he goes and we confer after every trip. The way he describes his experience makes me feel like I am right there with him. So not only do I hear what he does, I can feel what he does as well, going a long way to remembering trends and associations with past memories (and patterns). **Jared** got his captain's license in May of 2011. In June, he started taking out the occasional trip here and there. He was the easiest guy to train that I have ever had. In fact, he was already trained, or it seemed so. He will tell you that he still has a lot to learn. But I will tell you that he has

the knowledge of a four year captain already. Anyway, as a team, both **Captain Ian** and **Captain Jared** do one hell of a job. I don't believe there is anyone better. Really! Thanks so much.

As luck would have it, I lost my swing deck hand, a wonderful guy, **Alec Levine**, for the summer. There were a couple of conflicts where he lives in Alabama. Instead, I was able to have one of my most respected **Bunny Clark** regular anglers, **Sean Devich** take his place. **Sean** used to take the occasional fishing trip on his own boat as a licensed captain. He let his license lapse but asked to work for me to take **Alec's** place. I had expected he would do a good job but I never realized he would do such a good job that it felt like he had been on the boat forever. I think that the fact he already knew the **Bunny Clark** system went a long way to getting in sync right away. The fact that he is a genuinely considerate kind person who knows how to fillet fish, catch fish and build rods made him a fixture of the **Bunny Clark** and special. And he was already a good boat handler so after he was done cleaning I never had to worry about getting the boat moored for the evening, a huge help. Thank you, **Sean**. I couldn't have asked for any better. And I also very much appreciate the help lobstering!

Micah Tower is taking over **Sean's** position this season as the swing deck hand. He has been lobstering with me summers since he was six years old and fishing on the **Bunny Clark** since he could walk. I have never touched the wheel of the **Petrel** since he started lobstering (except for putting the boat on the mooring before he was eight). He loves to fish, loves the anglers and has a tremendous respect for **Captain's Ian** and **Jared**. I'm very much looking forward to seeing how he handles being the deck hand.

My wife, **Debbie**, has been the shore captain for so many years now that it's hard to remember when she took the reins over totally. Suffice it to say, the business wouldn't run without her. Her advice to me, the accounting, the way she handles our reservationists and the way she treats the crew makes her the partner I would choose over and over again. Plus, I guess it helps that she is a wonderful wife. I always feel like I roped her into this business (or lash-up as it was called in the clipper ship days) but she has never complained. I have always thought of her as my right arm. But, probably now, it's the other way around. Thanks for having me, **Deb**. I would be lost without you.

Jane Staples is our next in command ashore. A wonderful person and reservationist as well, **Jane** grew up a few houses down from where I grew up. We live closer together now. So not only did she know me from the beginning, she knew what to expect from the beginning. And it was no surprise to me that she does such a good job. Part of doing business in a town is knowing the local population and how it works. She does. Also, **Jane** always takes over without a question when needed. And she gets involved in the office work and the day to day. Thank you, **Jane**. I'm so glad you are here.

We had three girls as our summer reservations team. My daughter, **Halley**, completed her sixth year with us last year. **Halley** is outgoing and, of course, knows the business backwards and forwards. She has always been very good with people on the phone. She's been an asset to me. Plus, I couldn't have picked a better more honest daughter.

That helps! **Katie Graichen** completed her fifth year with us during the early part of the summer and the later part of the summer. And I was very glad to see her. She has something special that I just can't put my finger on. She was great with the people, an exceptional personality and certainly very easy for me to work with. **Lathrop Kelly**, a good friend of **Halley's**, is very much like **Halley** in that she is very outgoing. Her second year with us, she seemed to blossom last year. She was very efficient, great with the people and very precise. It was wonderful having this team of reservationists. It would be hard to find better. Thanks so very much for being there and all the great help you provide to us and our customers.

During the middle of the summer, **Lydia Perkins** (ME) took a temporary position with us as a reservationist. Already our best cashier at **Barnacle Billy's**, it was a no brainer to accept her into the fold of an already dynamic team. And she didn't disappoint. Very mature and outgoing, she held the fort nicely when it was her turn to jump in. Thanks very much, **Lydia**, great job!

This was my fifth season riding in the **Pan-Massachusetts Challenge (PMC)**, an 192 mile two day cycling event in August to raise money for cancer research and care at the **DFCI**, Boston, Massachusetts. The ending total for five years of fund raising came to \$127,024.25 through the **Jimmy Fund**, the fund raising arm of the **DFCI**. Last year alone I was able to raise \$31,015.00 from 351 separate donations. Most of this came from anglers of the **Bunny Clark** in \$20.00 increments but I did get some very generous donations, the largest of which was one for \$7,000.00. And for this support I am deeply grateful. I have already renewed my application for the 2012 **PMC** and am looking forward to raising as much money as I can. The money raised helps to maintain the most wonderful cancer facility in the country right in our own back yard. This year I found that six people became cancer free because of my direct involvement in the **DFCI**. They were going to be treated elsewhere until my writings changed their minds. Three people told me only after they became cancer free this year, even though they had started treatment months before! I will continue to support the **DFCI** because of their track record, the fact that 100% of the money goes directly to the **DFCI** (the **United Way**, for instance, reserves more than 28% of your donation for administrative costs) and because the more money they receive the better their chances are of hiring the best researchers. I hope you can help me celebrate the joy I get from supporting a great cause at a wonderful place in the form of a future donation. Otherwise, let's go fishing!

As I always say, the people who help me the most are the anglers who go out fishing with me. For this we all give our most heartfelt thanks. For without you the **Bunny Clark** could not be. And without you it certainly would not be as fun. So, as I end this **Guestletter**, and when it's long over, I will remember the many good people it represents and the fun times ahead. I am very much looking forward to the new season. And I'm very much looking forward to seeing you all there!

Best Fishes,

Tim Tower

