

Welcome to the 2015 FisherPoets Gathering

In order of significance I rate the top events in my life like this:

1. The day my beautiful bride said, "I do";
2. The days my kids were born;

3. My first FisherPoets Gathering.

My wife would probably tell you that the FisherPoets Gathering is the only one that gets consistently celebrated on an annual basis, and I have to admit she's right. But let me explain to you why the FisherPoets Gathering means so much.

The first FisherPoets Gathering took place in 1998, and I refused to go because I figured if there was ever a sure sign I was in a dying industry, a FisherPoets Gathering was it. See, back then my fishery, the Westcoast Groundfish Trawl fishery, was just starting down a road that would take almost two decades to travel, and the changes we were about to go through were drastic, sometimes painful. In 2000, my fishery was declared a federal economic and environmental disaster.

In 1999, my friend Pat Dixon and my wife, Tiffani, pressured me into attending the second FisherPoets Gathering, and I saw firsthand it wasn't a eulogy at all, but a celebration. I heard people reading poems and telling stories about why they loved the fishing life, and it forced me to remember the reasons I became a fisherman. Af-

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ter that first year I was hooked, and I haven't missed a FisherPoets Gathering since. It became like a life-ring to me when the changes in my fishery seemed too difficult and the future was filled with uncertainty. When my thoughts alternated between homicide and suicide, the FisherPoets Gathering gave me something to hold on to, reminded me why I loved this industry, and gave me a support group. In time I went from spectator to presenter, and I started telling my own story through poetry.

The 2015 FisherPoets Gathering is a celebration more than any other for me because late in 2014 both Seafood Watch and The Marine Stewardship Council gave my fishery a "Sustainable" rating. All our hard work, grief and uncertainty have resulted in a fish-

ery that is now a model of what is possible, from disaster to sustainability in 15 years.

Also, as a result of the most successful grass-roots campaign ever to protect a natural resource, Bristol Bay has been protected from oil and gas exploration, and the danger from Pebble Mine is at bay. There you have two more excellent reasons to celebrate.

So, welcome to the biggest FisherPoets Gathering yet and remember, THIS AIN'T NO FUNERAL! We've been here for 18 years and are still growing because the Gathering is made up of people who refuse to give up on something they love. It's been almost two decades, but we're just getting started!

*Rob Seitz,
Los Osos, CA*

Don't forget your entry button!

Where:

The FisherPoets Gathering Gearshack, 1144 Commercial St. Buttons are also available in advance at Lucy's Books (348 12th St.), KMUN's Tillicum House (1445 Exchange St.), Wet Dog Cafe (foot of 11th Street), Old Town Framing (1287 Commercial St.), and during the Gathering at all venues.

When:

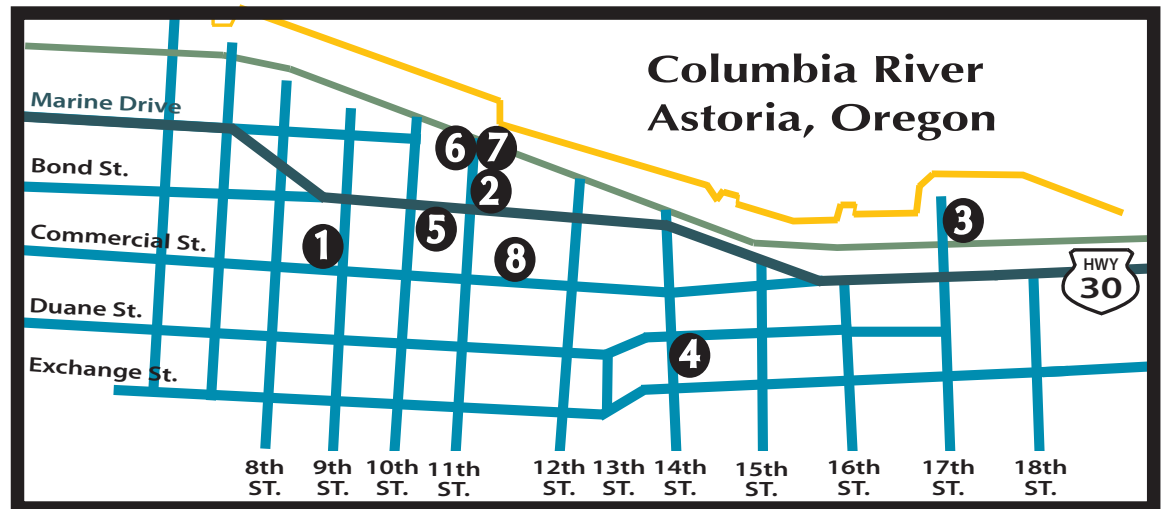
FPG Gearshack open 2 to 10 p.m. Friday, Feb. 27 and noon to 9 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 28. Closed Sunday.

Why:

Event button guarantees entry all weekend at all venues.

Price:

\$15 per button
Students under age 18 get in free.



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- 1 ASTORIA EVENT CENTER 255 9TH St.
 - 2 COLUMBIAN THEATER 1102 Marine Dr.
 - 3 COLUMBIA RIVER MARITIME MUSEUM 1792 Marine Dr.
 - 4 FORT GEORGE BREWERY and PUBLIC HOUSE 426 14th St.
 - 5 KALA 1017 Marine Dr.
 - 6 PIER 11 at the foot of 11th Street
 - 7 VOODOO ROOM 1114 Marine Dr.
 - 8 WET DOG CAFE 144 11th St.
- FPG GEARSHACK 1144 Commercial St.



Photo by Alex Pajunas

Sierra Golden, of Maple Falls, Washington, performs a poem at KALA during last year's FisherPoets Gathering. Golden also taught a class at the Barbey Maritime Center called "How to Write a Poem in 4D," using diction, details, description and direction.