

Welcome to the 2016 FisherPoets Gathering

In ancient times, during competitions at the Olympic games, winning poets were awarded laurel crowns. Ever since, from poetic jousts in the time of Cervantes to today's slams, performing poets have vied for such victories over their rivals.

The annual FisherPoets Gathering has none of that. We come together, not in a spirit of competition, but of camaraderie — a celebration of hard work and nature and the common bonds forged among those who make their living on the water.

These poets are a diverse group of men and women. Some have a lifetime of seafaring under their belt. For others,

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commercial fishing is a recently acquired passion. Still others have left the work behind, but found that it won't quite leave them. Oh, and there is one land-lubber cowboy, which is a long story. Suffice it to say, as he's remarked, the heart of a cowboy and the heart of a fisherman are not that far apart. He can work in my skiff any day.

Do not let the word "poetry"

deter you. The Gathering is more highliner than highbrow. You will hear poems and stories and songs, all with a salty, hard-working theme. The pieces are a fortunate bit of by-catch inspired by our work on the water, which gives them a ring of truth.

My friend and fellow fisher-poet Tele Aadsen once gave me the best writing advice I've ever heard: "Find words among the fish." There are so many stories out there, floating by on every opener. You will hear the ones we are fortunate enough to catch.

Oh, I fibbed a little at the beginning. It's okay. That's what fishermen do. We do have a poetry competition, Saturday night at the Astoria Event Center, open to all participants and audience members. The goal is to come up with a short poem based on a line announced Friday night. Everyone has a go at the mic. Audience applause determines the winner. But there are no laurel crowns and, really, there are no losers.

So enjoy the fun with us in Astoria. You can't find a better return on 15 dollars and two days of your time. Heck, jump up on stage yourself — but fair warning: There may be no turning back.

I was a very reluctant first-time participant several years ago, but I'm an eager one now, looking forward to my fifth FisherPoets Gathering. It's an addicting kind of terror. I'm glad you're here.

Meezie Hermansen
Kasilof, AK



Fred Bailey, of Gabriola Island, British Columbia, reads his poetry inside the Voodoo Room at last year's festival. Catch him this year during the 5 p.m. hour Friday at KALA and at 5 p.m. sharp Saturday at the Astoria Event Center.

Don't forget your entry button!

Where:

The FisherPoets Gathering Gearshack,
1254 Commercial St.

Buttons are also available in advance at:

- Old Town Framing, 1287 Commercial St.,
- The Fox and the Fawn, 1008 Commercial St.,
- KMUN's Tillicum House, 1445 Commercial St.,
- The Wet Dog Café, 144 11th St.,
- Astoria-Warrenton Chamber of Commerce, 111 Marine Drive,
- And during the Gathering at all venues.

When:

FPG Gearshack open 2 to 10 p.m. Friday, Feb 26 and 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. Saturday, Feb 27. Closed Sunday.

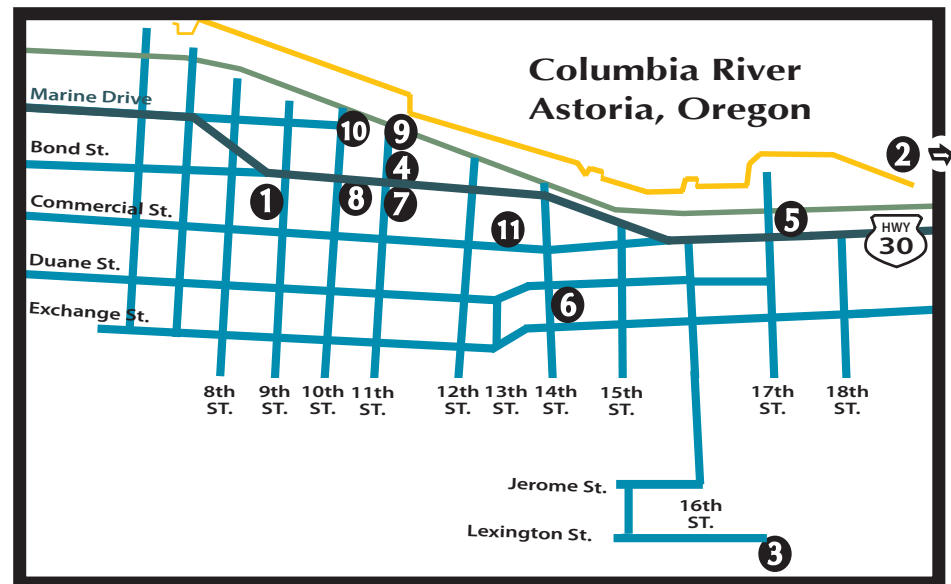
Why:

Event button guarantees entry all weekend at all venues.

Price:

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

Previous page poster art by Jay Speakman
Photos by Joshua Bessex



- 1 ASTORIA EVENT CENTER 255 9TH St.
 - 2 CANNERY WORKERS' MUSEUM at Pier 39
 - 3 CLATSOP COMMUNITY COLLEGE 1651 Lexington Ave,
 - 4 COLUMBIAN THEATER 1102 Marine Dr.
 - 5 COLUMBIA RIVER MARITIME MUSEUM 1792 Marine Dr.
 - 6 FORT GEORGE BREWERY and PUBLIC HOUSE 426 14th St.
 - 7 IMOGEN GALLERY 240 11th St.
 - 8 KALA 1017 Marine Dr.
 - 9 VOODOO ROOM 1114 Marine Dr.
 - 10 WET DOG CAFE 144 11th St.
 - 11 WINEKRAFT 80 10th St.
- FPG GEAR SHACK 1254 Commercial St.