

# Fourth-generation fisher's secret is revealed

## Ilwaco teen captures sights, sounds and smells of life afloat

By PATRICK WEBB

Taylor Young's family had no idea he had a secret.

All was revealed at a parents' conference at Ilwaco High School.

John and Johanna Taylor were shocked — but delighted — to learn their 17-year-old son was a poet. And a good one, according to his language arts teacher, Jill Glinert.

The teenager's work will be showcased at the 2017 FisherPoets Gathering in Astoria.

Organizers like Jon Broderick are pleased, too.

"He's probably the youngest guy on the schedule this year," he said. "We've had high-school-age fisherpoets in the past, but Taylor is the first scheduled participant who wasn't even born when the FisherPoets Gathering began. I thought it might be fitting to celebrate our 20th annual with a new fisherpoet about that age himself."

Taylor Young, an IHS senior, started dabbling in poetry to help a friend who was having dating issues. That morphed into writing about what he knows best: fishing.

The Youngs are a multi-generational commercial fishing family. John Taylor grew up in Pelican, Alaska, learning from his own father and grandfather. That makes Taylor a fourth-generation fisher. He's even named Taylor Bay for an Alaska locale.

His brother Joshua, 7, is about the age Taylor was when he started fishing.

Taylor has accompanied his father to Alaska on the Falcon, a 59-foot vessel they sail north from Seattle most summers. The sights, sounds and smells of long-lining for black cod and halibut inspire him to put pencil to paper.

"Sometimes they come to me and can be triggered by suggestions, or something can set it off. It's like a

sixth sense," said Taylor. "When you are sitting inside the boat, the wind will start to whistle through a crack in something. The wind will be blowing, the seas are being rough. I look at my surroundings and will write it down ... Sometimes, I look at a picture then put two and two together."

Teacher Glinert serves as his diligent editor; she appreciates Taylor's trust in her critical feedback about the hand-written words that describe dangers faced by the "fishermen brotherhood" in poems called "Mayday" and "Deep Blue Sea."

His initial writing skills developed from class projects; both acknowledge the words flow more smoothly now it's a choice not a chore. "It was fantastic to see the transformation," Glinert recalled. "He went fishing and came back with books filled with poems. He would say, 'What did I think of this?' You can almost feel the motion of the boat and the sea and smell the salt air. I started to realize his poetry was able to carry me off to visualize the ocean."

His parents sparkle with comparable enthusiasm when they gather around the dining room table at their Ilwaco home to chat. "We are very proud of him," said John Taylor, 45, during a break from crabbing out of Westport, Washington. "We had no idea," he said, thinking back to that IHS parent conference. "We went to

the school, and the teacher was raving about his writing skills."

His mom, Johanna, feels similarly about the way they found out. It was at the end of his junior year. "He had not shared anything with me. I am in awe — it's amazing," she said. "It makes me emotional, not knowing that he did this. I was, like, 'Wow! I'm amazed.'"

After his poetry appearance this

### MAYDAY

Blistering winds,  
Freezing sprays,  
The sound of an engine.  
Sounds of men yelling,  
Seeing their tears  
Tears of sorrow,  
Realizing they have  
one more trip.

The sound of Mayday,  
Mayday, Mayday, Mayday.  
The dropping of lines and  
pots  
For a moment of peace,  
Praying they are found  
Praying they come home in  
one piece.

Sailors putting their jobs on  
hold  
To save the crew of sinking  
vessels.  
The word Mayday will haunt  
fishermen forever  
That's the one word they  
fear:  
Mayday, Mayday, Mayday.

month, Taylor is looking forward to playing centerfield during his final IHS baseball season and graduating in June. He likely will work toward an associate's degree at Clatsop Community College before he applies for a marine biology program, possibly at the University of Alaska-Juneau, then a career outdoors. "I could not work behind a desk," he said.

He can expect a good crowd cheering him on when he shares his work at the FisherPoets Gathering. "I have told everybody about it," said his dad.



PHOTO BY PATRICK WEBB

At 17, Taylor Young of Ilwaco, Washington, will be the youngest fisherman performing his work at the FisherPoets Gathering in Astoria. The Ilwaco High School student was encouraged by his teacher. Now he fills notebooks with hand-written poetry.



YOUNG FAMILY PHOTO

Ilwaco teenager Taylor Young is pictured in the hold of a crabbing vessel, learning his craft.