

Welcome to the 2017 FisherPoets Gathering

As humans we're wired for stories. There's something within us that loves a tale with heroes and bad guys, with humor and heartbreak, with grand adventures and scary dark places. Stories are the oldest and still the most common art form on earth.

A good story will quiet the background noise in your mind, dim the blinking lights of the present moment, and take you to another place and time. If the story is well told, indeed, you may find yourself laughing or crying or having the daylight scared out of you, or even suddenly feeling that same fog of joy and vulnerability you had the first time you fell in love.

These days, most of us get our stories from movies or books or songs on our iPhones. On the last weekend in Febru-

The stories come live and unfiltered, straight from the hearts of men and women who have gone down to the sea in ships and come back to tell the tale.

ary, the stories come live and unfiltered, straight from the hearts of men and women who have gone down to the sea in ships and come back to tell the tale.

Some of the performers may have spent a single season, or even just one day, trying to catch fish for money. Some have spent decades staring into the weather beyond the sight of land. But greenhorn or ancient mariner, all their tales come from the sea, and the sea remains the wildest and most mysterious place on earth. Some of the stories at the Gathering will break your heart or haunt you on the drive

home. But not all. It takes a lot of humor and horsing around to get through a long salmon season or a winter in the Bering Sea, and you'll hear that side of the fishing life, too. Some of the stories will stretch the bounds of credibility, ever so slightly. But all of them are true in the truest sense because they come from the deepest human experience, and all of them are worth hearing.

When the last poet or reader or musician walks off the stage, you will be glad you came. If it's your first Gathering, you will wish it wasn't.

The Gathering is not strictly about the performances though, and it's not a private party for mariners only. In some ways it's like the old fur trapper rendezvous on the Missouri River: a once-a-year chance for fishermen from both coasts and Alaska to see old friends and make new ones in a community that is usually scattered and separated by large distances.

But it's also about welcoming non-mariners into a warm wheelhouse and sharing the experience of being alive and being a fisherman with them.

The weekend includes workshops on knot tying, poetry, and song writing. There are film showings, tours, a dance, and, on Saturday night, an open, on-site poetry contest where everyone gets to write a poem and read it on stage.

So come on down. Be thinking about that poem you might write. We'll see you there.

*Toby Sullivan
Kodiak, AK*



PHOTO BY
JOSHUA BESSEX

John Elliott of Saltspring, British Columbia, will read at 9 p.m. Friday at the Voodoo Room and during the 7 p.m. hour Saturday at KALA.

Don't forget your entry button!

Where:

The FisherPoets Gathering Gearshack, 1184 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 Exchange 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 is open 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. Friday, Feb. 24 and 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 25. Closed Sunday.

Why:

Event button guarantees entry all weekend at all venues.

Price:

\$15 per button

Students under age 18 get in free.



- | | |
|----|---|
| 1 | ASTORIA EVENT CENTER 255 9TH St. |
| 2 | BARBEY MARITIME CENTER 1792 Marine Dr. |
| 3 | COLUMBIAN THEATER 1102 Marine Dr. |
| 4 | FORT GEORGE BREWERY and PUBLIC HOUSE 426 14th St. |
| 5 | KALA 1017 Marine Dr. |
| 6 | LIBERTY THEATER 1203 Commercial St. |
| 7 | VOODOO ROOM 1114 Marine Dr. |
| 8 | WET DOG CAFE 144 11th St. |
| 9 | FPG GEARSHACK 1184 Commercial St. |
| 10 | WINEKRAFT 80 10th St. |
| | PIER 39 #1 39th St. |