

REELING IN THE AUDIENCE

The 21st annual FisherPoets Gathering — taking place Feb. 23-25 — honors the fisherman's life through art

By **WILLIAM HAM**
FOR COAST WEEKEND

On the last weekend of February, commercial fishermen travel from far and wide to congregate in Astoria to ply their wares. This, in itself, is not unusual; fishing has been part of the culture of the North Coast since the mid-19th century.

But on this occasion, their notebooks are their nets, their catch is measured by the metrical foot, and the only license required is poetic.

It is time, in other words, for the FisherPoets Gathering.

The 21st Annual Gathering, taking place Friday, Feb. 23, through Sunday, Feb. 25, in locations throughout Astoria, showcases the work of poets, songwriters, storytellers and visual artists from all aspects of the commercial fishing community. Skippers, deckhands, cannery workers and beach fishermen, from locales as far-flung as Brussels and as nearby as Chinook, come to share their observations of the fisherman's life through their art: celebratory and serious, comic and tragic.

This year, no fewer than 110 fish-

erpoets will be performing at seven main venues on Friday and Saturday evenings: the Wet Dog Cafe, the Voodoo Room, the Columbian Theater, Fort George Brewery's Lovell Showroom, KALA Gallery, the Liberty Theatre and (on Saturday only) the Labor Temple Cafe. Performances from these venues will be simulcast live on KMUN radio and at coastradio.org.

In addition, other locations such as Pier 39, the Barbey Maritime Center and the Clatsop County Heritage Museum will be hosting workshops on everything from weaving traditional chafing mats to Japanese fish print making, poetry and songwriting tutorials, and seminars on subjects like "Protecting Working Waterfronts and Community Fisheries" and "Tides: the Science and Spirit of the Ocean." (A complete listing of events can be found on the Gathering's official website, fisherpoets.org.)

MORE INFO

Check out the official program to this year's FisherPoets Gathering starting on Page 13

BELOW: "The Sky It Falls," on view at Imogen Gallery during the FisherPoets Gathering
COREY ARNOLD PHOTO



FILE PHOTO

Jon Broderick, founder of the FisherPoets Gathering

