

Interview with Pat Mattera [PM]

Occupation: Case worker with Elderly/ Fisherman's wife

Port Community: Galilee, Point Judith, Rhode Island

Interviewer: Azure Cygler

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Catch Share Oral Histories Project – NOAA Fisheries

Logger/Transcriber: Matthew Schult

INDEX: [minutes:seconds]

Brewed Awakenings, South County, RI

Interview

[00:00]

AC : Okay, just for the record my name is Azure Cygler and today is the 31st, already, of August, 2012. We are at Brewed Awakenings Coffee House in South Kingston, Rhode Island. And if you could Pat, just for the record, give me your name, and where you live?

PM : My name is Patricia Mattera, and I live at 113 Lewiston Avenue, West Kingston, Rhode Island.

AC : Perfect, and your husband is currently a fisherman, or was a fisherman?

PM : My husband is currently a retired fisherman, recently, since December. We sold our vessel, and he is still involved in the industry on many different levels, but he's not an active fisherman.

AC : Okay, and his home port was where?

PM : Galilee, Point Judith, Rhode Island.

AC : And his vessel's name?

PM : The *Travis & Natalie*.

AC : Was he in a sector or in the common pool?

PM : I believe he was in the sector.

AC : I think so, too. I interviewed him in, for the record I interviewed Fred Mattera in November, and he was in a sector then. So [if] he sold it in December, he probably was.

PM : Yes.

AC : And would you mind me asking how old you are?

PM : I'm sixty years old.

AC : Okay. And to begin the interview I [would] like to just get a little bit of context about yourself, where you're from, some family history, how you came to be here, those sorts of details. Your family structure currently, married, kids, and so on, have at it.

PM : Okay, I came from Lancaster, Pennsylvania and I moved up here to go to the University of Rhode Island, and I met my husband there, Fred, and...

AC : What year was this, roughly?

PM : 1969. I graduated in 1973. My husband and I have been married, it's going to be 39 years tomorrow...

AC : Wow, congratulations.

PM : And...(muffled)....

AC : Yes, sure, of course!

PM : And so when I met Fred, right after school we got married, but during college he took a summer job. He was in Political Science, wanted to be a lawyer, wanted to be all these different things, took a summer job on a fishing boat and that was the end of college (laughs). So he pretty much gave up that career and decided to become a fisherman and was until just recently.

AC : Always in Rhode Island?

PM : Yes, always lived in Rhode Island in South County. I studied sociology, I was a social worker for the state for a few years, but then when I had my first child I decided to stay home with him because Fred was a fisherman and I didn't want the kids to not have one parent that they could count on, because he was gone, you know, usually a week, ten days, come home for a day, back out again. So I left my career to have my children and then I've recently gone back to full-time work, I always did part-time work over the years, I managed the business. Well, he hates when I say I manage the business, I manage the book-keeping of the business, financial and a lot of the running around for permits and yadda-yadda...

AC : That's a huge contribution.

PM : And keeping the home fires burning, which you have to do when you're married to a fisherman because they're not there when the pipes burst in the winter and all of those things, so....

AC : [On] record snow years, your whole driveway flooded with the snow.

PM : And then I went back to work full-time four years ago, I worked for the town of South Kingstown. I am the Case Manager/Activities Facilitator for an adult day service, servicing the needs of cognitively impaired and physically impaired elderly people, so that's what I'm doing now.

AC : It sounds like it could be a stressful occupation.

PM : Yeah, it is. I love people and I love working with the elderly, I did a lot of volunteer work over the years, but you know, doing it 35 hours a week is, can be stressful, but I do love it.

AC : Now was it a choice to go back full-time, for your own enjoyment, or was it a financial necessity?

PM : Yeah, well, yes, I went back to work mostly because the fishing industry had gone, you know, had started to have so many financial difficulties, owning a fishing vessel. We had a fire on the boat....

AC : I remember this.

PM : I think that was about seven, eight years ago, the fire on the boat really set us back to such a point that we never could really recoup after that; because of regulations, because of rising fuel costs, because it was an older, not an old boat, but an older boat so the more you tear it apart, a lot wasn't covered by the fire, by the insurance. So, the health care rising costs being self-employed, trying to provide yourself with retirement, health care, we couldn't afford health care anymore, the business couldn't afford to pay for our healthcare, so I went back to work, for, mainly, healthcare.

AC : That's a common choice.

PM : Yeah.

AC : Now was, so did the boat insurance not cover...?

PM : The fire?

AC : You said boat insurance didn't cover the fire?

PM : Well, it did cover the fire, but because you would start ripping out a wall, well, not a wall, whatever you would call it in a boat, you might find behind there, there's, you know, repair to the steel. You know, you lose all the Freon to the freezing units, you..., just so many different things that had to be replaced or fixed. And what was supposed to be, you know, a so-many month project turned out to be a much longer project. And also too, you've got all that down time. You still have a mortgage to pay on the boat, you still have insurance to pay, insurance costs for fishing were out of control, I mean, just rising, rising, so you still had all of those bills to pay, but you had nothing coming in. So that was hard, and then when he went to go back fishing, you know, it's fishing; maybe the fish aren't there, maybe the prices aren't there, maybe the weather's bad, fuel prices are up, so it was just really hard to get back. It was a shame because we were so close; we were like a couple payments away from paying the boat off, finally. Finally paying the boat off, and then we had the fire.

AC : And how long was the boat out of commission to be repaired?

PM : I think it was about eight months, [I] think it was almost about eight months. So that was disheartening, I think that was kind of the straw that broke the camel's back, because Fred really wasn't ready. I was always encouraging him to go, he's so knowledgeable and so experienced in so many different aspects of the fishing and the insurance and I was always trying to encourage him to go into some other field related to that, but get out of the industry. But he wasn't ready, wasn't ready to let that go, I think, you know, that was a big part of who he was. But then after the fire, the "For Sale" sign went out.

AC : Wow. And did it take, then, seven or so years to...?

PM : Yes, yes.

AC : Just because the interest in purchasing a boat?

PM : Well, right, who wants to buy a boat with a failing industry? With an industry that's plagued with regulations, plagued with, just all the things that you deal with in a business like a farmer who's reliant on the weather, you know, price of goods. So we decided that we would get out then, but then we just never had anybody that was interested in it.

AC : And finally a buyer from out of state?

PM : Finally a buyer, from Cape May.

AC : Cape May, okay.

PM : Yup, Dan Cohen. I don't know if you know his name, he has a fleet of boats, you know, he has scallop licenses, so, the scallopers are the ones that are surviving now and really benefitting because it's not as highly regulated from what I know, and prices are exorbitant for a scalloper. If we had had a scallop permit for our boat, we probably could've done well, you know, and we had our heyday, we had our good years. But you know, that was always one more industry that was put out; I mean Fred invested in gillnetting-that was banned. All the equipment we had from gillnetting, what do you do with it? Nothing, you eat it, you know? Pair trawling, invested in pair trawling, pair trawling was very good, but pair trawling was banned. So it seemed like every time he invested in a different type of fishing we'd have a short period of time where we'd be getting on our feet and then the regulations would come.

So, and Fred's always been a conscientious fisherman, Fred has always believed in wanting the industry to be there for the next generation, and he's spent his whole career fishing, trying to maintain that industry. Not for himself, just for himself, but for other fishermen, and it's very frustrating, I mean he spent many, many years-especially with the gillnetting-going to Washington battling that. He still goes to Washington battling. It's a very frustrating occupation.

AC : Well and he maybe even doubly so in that he is so involved in any sort of committee, and for years, is that correct, he was in, you know, council levels and foundations...?

PM : Yes, yes.

AC : So how did you, where was the spare time to be home?

PM : Well there wasn't, and that was the thing, is because he was either fishing or at a meeting. Or, you know, just involved in the bigger picture of it. He was on the Board of Directors for the old co-op, used to be working, working, working at the co-op. We took a huge hit on the co-op. I mean we lost tons of money on that, when that went under because we were one of the last ones to get paid. It was unsecured debt, the fish we sold we didn't get paid for it, we still had to pay our crew, we probably lost \$100,000 on that.

AC : Now how did that work, there was no ownership, so...?

PM : There was an old fishermen's co-op, and it was a co-operative.

AC : So Fred was one of the...?

PM : And then he was, he was on the Board of Directors for it, and because of his love of the industry and his caring about his fellow fishermen, he always said to them, "I'll take, when you finally get it figured out, then you pay me, you pay this guy, you pay this guy, you pay this guy." And then there was nothing, then there was nothing and it went

under. I don't really know all the details of whether the State or anybody tried to get involved, but we took a big hit with that, so it was just one thing after another.

AC : This was before the fire?

PM : Yeah, that was a long time ago, do you remember the co-op?

AC : I think when I came into fisheries, twelve, thirteen years ago, I remember it was sort of like, it seemed like it had been recently extinct.

PM : It's sad because it was good, I mean it was good at the time. It was a place for the fishermen to take out their fish, and it wasn't really like for profit, it was to just supply the fishermen with a place to take out, get a fair market price, but, and I don't know all the details of how the mismanagement or whatever happened down there, I just know that, you know, that really affected us personally. But that was a long time ago.

AC : Now making those decisions about being involved, was it always something that you and Fred did together or was he just sort of, you know, [he] signed up for all these things and would come home and say, "Oh well, I'm on another committee." I mean, I think he's so kind and caring that I can see where people probably were trying to pull him, or was it a joint... how did that work for you guys?

PM : I think that it really affects, I think, your marriage and your family because it's kind of a workaholic type of thing, you know, it's for the betterment of maybe an industry or his fellow fisherman, but you know, sometimes, and I think a lot of families face that, it can be in other industries too, but you know, where, I felt like, "Well what about us?" type of thing. So it did cause a lot of stress, you know, over the years because you felt, as the family, you know, you weren't as important. I mean I knew I was, and I knew the kids were, but he just was so focused on that.

AC : Was that from the beginning of his fishing career that he always sort of took on the extra duty?

PM : No, not really in the beginning because first he started out with other boats, and then he bought his first boat, which was pretty soon after we were married, *The Hobbit*. And it was an old little boat, it was an old little boat, and it had a lot of problems and I think we walked away from that owing money. I think when we sold that boat we came out owing money.

AC : Like "I married a fisherman, what was I thinking, carpenter, carpenter, should've been a carpenter." (laughs)

PM : Yeah (laughs). And then after he worked for a few other fishermen, and then, you know what? The best thing was, was Barry Gallup at Rhode Island Engine wanted to buy a

boat, and he went to Fred and he said, "I'm going to be a partner with you, and I'll be a silent partner." And he put up most of the money, but we had to come up with some too, but to buy this boat, and Fred was excited because he went to Alabama and they had kind of designed the boat, build the boat, Barry let him name it, that was the *Travis & Natalie*. And he had run a couple of boats, the *Barbara Joan* for Barry, and you know, I mean Fred's so dependable and he was such a good fisherman, he was a highliner, you know, those highliners he was, I don't remember what year that was....

AC : Yeah, I remember the cover of the *National Fisherman*.

PM : Yeah, so he was that and, so, you know, that was a good time. That was a very good time for fishing, because it was exciting that he had this boat. It was kind of a dream that he had, it was a beautiful boat, it had the kids' name on it, and fishing was good then. We were starting to lead a good life, I was able to be home, and that's what I have to put into perspective, sometimes when I feel some of my frustration and anger over fishing, is that it provided me for a long time to be home with my children, and I wanted that, and he wanted that. And a lot of other occupations don't allow a wife to be home, so that was a good time. And it was good for awhile, I don't remember how many years, but it started probably after the gillnetting, and I don't remember when that was, but it seemed like....

AC : Were the kids in school still, in like, primary school?

PM : Nah, they were probably, I'll bet my son was probably ten or twelve, he's thirty-three, so, because... but there were a lot of things that would happen. My sister was getting married in Annapolis, and Fred was so into his gillnetting, he was like, "Well, I don't think I can go to..." it was swordfishing, the gillnetting, and so he was like "Well, I don't think I can go to the wedding because this is swordfishing season and that's when I'm making some big money."

And I was like, "This is my sister, you've known her since she was young, it's important for you to be there." So he flew in like the day of the wedding (laughs)....

AC : Like "I'm here, I am here!" (laughs)

PM : Yeah, and he did make it for that, but you know there were a lot of times like that where you're alone, you're alone for things, or he would insist he had to go for the holiday or this or that because the fishing was good, and that's hard to take.

AC : So he was always offshore, fishing offshore with multiple day trips, never one day come in and....

PM : No, he was never a day-tripper (laughs). No, I don't even remember, maybe the, I think *The Hobbit* even went out for days, I don't ever remember him coming home at night.

AC : And how did you, I'm thinking of being a mother, my son, and thinking about if my husband wasn't there, I would... what kind of rhythm do you have to establish to just make things work, I mean how did you... when did you figure that out? And how did you do it?

PM : Number one, going back to my own self and my own family, I was raised with four girls, it was four girls in my family, and thank God my father was ahead of his times and he believed all of us girls should have a college education. We didn't need a man to rely on, if you have a man to rely on, fine, but you can do it as a woman. And he taught us everything, how to change a tire, how to balance your checkbooks, how to manage your finances, how to fix things, start the lawn mower, blah, blah, blah, jump a car battery. Because he wanted all of us girls [to know] how to be an independent woman, which was very ahead of its time when I was growing up, you know, and I think that helped me in my life, to be able to, you know, manage things on my own.

But it was a learning, you know, a skill that I had to learn to find my own self, I think of my own kind of life, because if..., it was really hard to be waiting for him all the time, waiting, waiting, waiting, "When's he coming in? When's he coming home, when's he coming home for dinner?" and so I started to find things that I found, you know, pleasure in; volunteering, I started to sing in the choir and things like that so that I had a group of friends for myself, because I think with fishing it's all waiting, the woman often is just waiting, waiting, waiting. And I found that made me very unhappy and very frustrated so I had to find some things for me to do, and I had very supportive parents, they were in Pennsylvania, but they, if I needed them I could always go home or they would come up to help me with the kids.

AC : And your four siblings, were they somewhat close?

PM : Or three siblings, so I'm four, the fourth.

AC : Three, yes, sorry, and are they all geographically close?

PM : No, my one sister has been sailing around the world for the last thirty some years, and my other two sisters are in Pennsylvania, one kind of was travelling around and then, but they're both now in Pennsylvania, back around where we grew up.

AC : And you guys are all a tight unit?

PM : Yes.

AC : A fairly tight unit, all the kids, your kids know their aunts and grandparents, are they still with us, your parents?

PM : No, well, my Dad passed away, that was awhile ago. My Mom has vascular dementia and so she is in a retirement community in Pennsylvania. We tried to, I was driving home from here, you know, spending a week and then my sister would take a week, then we just got where it was my other sister came home from sailing for a year to live with her. It just got to be a point, and anybody who isn't familiar with dementia, you really can't leave them sometimes for even five minutes. So safety-wise we had to make the decision to close her home and have her go into the, a retirement center.

AC : Okay, now how about your social circles these days, is it..., actually before we get into that, you said Fred is retired?

PM : Yes.

AC : So he's now out, and you said he's still sort of involved in some things, how does that work for your lives? Is it better now for you, are you spending more time together? How are you sort of getting to know each other as a unit that's close, physically, more often than maybe the past, how does all that that work?

PM : Well, I think to kind of go back a little bit, when he was fishing all the time, then there was a period when my kids were off into college, where he had his brother running the boat, so he was around a lot. And then I had another adjustment because then he was home all the time, and (laughs) that was hard because for twenty years or whatever, I was the captain.

AC : Mm-hmm, the whole ship was, your home.

PM : Yeah, and now he was home, and so that was kind of hard because, you know, I was used to my independence and I was used to making all the decisions, and so that was kind of an adjustment. But then what would happen is then his brother would leave. He would go back on the boat, you know, and then over the last so many years it was like, when we owned the boat, captains weren't so easy to find and they weren't so reliable so he would have to go back fishing. So it's been a lot of adjustment in the last so many years because he would be home, then he'd have to go back fishing, and I hated him going back fishing. I was so fearful of him out to sea and I was never like that. I mean if a storm came up, or, you know, I mean I would be nervous but it wasn't like what it became for me, where I was just so fearful something would happen to him out there. Now he's home, I'm at work all day, we have our weekends together, he has that safety training company, so, and he's still working on that foundation..., something else he's working on, I don't remember, I don't even know what that is, I don't remember. You know he still works on things like that, which I'm okay with that now, it's "Go to a meeting", because I kind of like to have a little space, you know? And my job is very, it's very loud, and it's very, it's just very tiring that I want to go home now and have some quiet. I don't want to talk to people because you're talking all day in a very noisy environment, kind of a lot of chaos.

AC : You need downtime...

PM : So now it's like, you know, it's wonderful because we can plan things. I like the fact that I can have a dinner party and he doesn't tell me two hours before the dinner party he's not going to be home. You know, if we have a wedding or we have anything we can go to that, we can plan that, and that's nice. And there were some years with Fred when the boat was doing well and the finances were good. We had a good captain, my son went to the Naval Academy, and we were able to go for all the football games and visit with my son and all the boys that, you know, I kind of had my little group of his friends I would take out to the movies and take out to dinner because they might not see their parents, you know. So we did have some, it afforded us some real good years.

AC : Interesting. Now, did Travis ever do the fishing end of the marine world?

PM : Oh yeah, well, he used to go out in the summer when he, well, I even have a picture of... I look back and I think "I don't know why I let him go, I really don't." But Fred, I mean I guess I just trusted Fred, but I look back and I think "Oh my God, why would I let him...?" he didn't even have a life jacket on, he's working out on the deck and he's got little rubber boots on and he's picking fish.

AC : Yup, I have pictures of my husband doing the same thing with a rusty pick when he's like eight, and I'm thinking, "What were your, but...?" you just, it was different, that's how it was.

PM : Right, it was, it was. And I don't know why, I guess I just trusted him and that, but he took him out when he was little a couple times, that wasn't a long trip, a couple days, then when he was in high school he'd take him out it was like a summer job. And in fact it was kind of cool because he was out on one trip and then Travis had done this chemistry contest at URI (University of Rhode Island) that they have every year for a scholarship, and he won that; he was the highest scorer for the chemistry test. And so it was in the paper, Travis coming back from a fishing trip on the *Travis & Natalie* not only landed a good fishing trip but he landed a full scholarship at URI, so it was kind of cute the way they threw that in. But no, he had no desire to be a fisherman, he did not want to be a fisherman, because Fred was kind of like, you know, "Would you want to be a fisherman, would you want to...?" Because I think Fred was kind of, caught the tail end of fishing when it was families, when it was those big-named families, the Westcott's, the Follett's, the... you know, and the sons would go into it, but that just wasn't Travis' cup of tea. He did go in the Navy, he was in the Navy, so....

AC : And is he still in the Navy?

PM : No, he, when he got out of the Naval Academy he was in flight school in Pensacola, but they found he was not multi-task, and so he wasn't able to continue flight school. And

so he served as Air Transfer Officer on the Abraham Lincoln, which was at the beginning of the Iraq war; so even though he was on a ship I was still a nervous wreck. They were deployed ten months, which is a long time, so that was, you know, nerve-wracking.

AC : Did that coincide with when Fred was still going out?

PM : And he was, Fred was having to go out a lot then, because we didn't have somebody to run the boat, so he was out fishing and Travis was off and I, just my anxiety was escalating and then I was home doing the books, which was another thing that kept me up awake at night. Because you'd sit up at the middle of the night, you'd think, "How do I pay the mortgage? How do I pay the insurance?" The fuels bills, I mean you'd get fuel bills, \$14,000; \$10,000; \$8,000; \$12,000; Stop 'n Shop \$3,000, it's like you'd lay in bed you'd think, "How am I going to pay this? Where am I going to get the money?" you know?

AC : Because you hadn't gone back to work at this, at that time, this was...?

PM : No, I was working, well, because the book-keeping really did take me a good part-time, it was like a part-time job. And then I had a part-time job at a hair salon, which was kind of a social thing for me, I also got all my hair [done] free and my kids got free, so you know what? That was good money. I was singing at the time, I had a little bit of business from that, singing weddings, funerals, I got paid for that. I sang at like a Narragansett church that would pay us, everything at my church was free. I did a lot of recording with a composer that did a liturgical music, and, you know, I got a little money from that. So I had that, the salon, the book-keeping and a lot of volunteer work.

AC : That's a huge amount of...

PM : Yeah, so, and you know what? The accountant used to tell me when the fishing was good, don't go to work, because you're just going to pay more and more taxes. Then when it started to slow down I started to take a salary from the boat, so I could afford to start putting away some IRA for myself, some, you know, pension planning.

AC : But at that time things, you guys were finding a way to make things work? Or I mean it sounds like it was, some fear of where the next, how the next set of bills would be paid, but you didn't seem like you were, you would always manage. Or were there times that you would come up short?

PM : Oh yeah, well, yeah, and you know what? I was a good book-keeper, and because Fred used to always say to me because Fred didn't want to know anything about the money, he really didn't want to know anything about the money, and if I tried to talk to him about it he would get very worried and upset. And then I felt like well, he's got the pressure of the boat, I shouldn't tell him, I should try to figure it out. But that put the burden on me and you know, but I would surprise him because, I think my Dad taught

me well about saving and budgeting and you know, then taxes would come up or he had to buy something and then I would say, "Well I put this money away, and I got this done and I paid this off and stuff." and so he'd always be like, "Oh wow, I don't know how you do that, you somehow were able to put money away again." But that's, I'm a saver, I like to pay things off, I don't like owing anybody anything.

So, you know, but that was mostly towards the end of fishing, like in the last, I would say ten years, that fishing became really, you're strangled. You were strangled in the industry. And maybe there were some parts of that, like Fred said, you know, with scalloping or whatever, they still did well, but you know what? The older your boat gets, the more repairs, like we would just start to get on top of things, and then the engine would go. Now you need an engine rebuilt. now you're looking at \$30-50,000 in repair work, and how many months with nothing coming in? So, I mean it was always something, and Fred and I used to disagree a lot of times because Fred wanted all the best on his boat, you know? He always had to have this, he had to have that, he had to have his equipment and he didn't waste it, but he had to have the best on everything. And I'd be like, "Let's wait a little, let's see." So that would sometimes cause some stress.

AC : But he would talk to you about those kind of bigger boat purchases knowing that you were doing the finances, but also was there just a rapport that you guys always had about making those kinds of decisions, or was it...?

PM : Well, we had our ups and downs on that, because one time, it was funny, because he would come home from fishing, I'd had a long day with the kids and the house, and you know, my work to do. And it would be eleven o'clock at night and he would want me to pull up something, and this was back in the day when you didn't even have a computer. I mean that you did everything, you know, with a pencil and an adding machine, so anything you needed to access information you'd need to go through all those journals, to look, to find that, whereas now on a computer you can pull all that stuff up. But he wanted some kind of information and I was like, "You know what? It's late, I'm tired" like, "You wouldn't be calling the accountant at eleven o'clock at night." And so he got, you know, attitude with me, and I just said, oh, and I think he took all my filing stuff and went –pssshew!- so I said "Fine, I quit. I quit, find another book-keeper that you can call at eleven o'clock at night."

AC : How soon did he apologize?

PM : Well, it was so funny, because the next day-and this is a story he might not want me telling-but the next day he came with a big bouquet of flowers and a card and he was like, "You're not only the best book-keeper, but you're the cutest." (laughs).

AC : Perfect, perfect.

PM : So, you know, we've had a lot of times like that.

AC : Sure, I can imagine it's a stressful industry and also both of your positions, you running a whole entire household alone, is a full-time job, plus [older people].

PM : And that's really why, too, I think I chose not to have anymore than two children. I would have probably had more kids, but I just didn't think I could handle more than two being on my own like that, you know? And it's just different, I think it's different when a husband is, say, in a corporate world and he's travelling, I don't know, maybe it's not, than being a fisherman's wife. I think that's a very unique position to be in, because it's... you're very concerned about them being out there, what's happening with the weather, are they safe? And that was something that I talked about when the Today Show did the interview, this was back in a time when you didn't have a cell phone. It was a, I didn't have a radio, I mean I had to call, in fact when I was pregnant with my daughter and he was going to fish right up until, you know, I went into labor and I had to call Rhode Island Engine to see if they could radio him to let him know what was going on.

AC : When you were in labor?

PM : Yeah, and I mean it was pretty close to when I was in labor and I called them and I said to radio Fred to come in, you know, and so he came in and I said, "You're not going back out." Because it was kind of a false labor, but I said, "You're not going back out." And then I think I had the baby like two days later, and then he went back out fishing. But it was like, I said, "Can you wait at least until my mother gets here to help me?" So, he waited till my mom came, my mom came and spent a week with me, and then my sister came and spent a few days, but he was back out fishing, so....

AC : Was it the fever of it or the passion, or was it like, "I have to make money to support..."

PM : Oh yes, oh, he was the Scup King, then.

AC : "Scup King"? (Laughs) Porgy king...scup, porgy, I love it.

PM : He was the Scup King.

AC : That was the name around the docks?

PM : He called himself the Scup King and I think people may have called him the Scup King because he was just catching the scup, and so the scup I guess were around then or whatever, so it is a bit of a fever. I think you get, well, you know what he used to always sort of say, it was a little bit maybe like a gambler, because you're driven by that pursuit, a hunter at sea, if where you're driven by "Ooh, they're out there, I got to get out there, I got to catch my share." And I mean, it is money, it's money.

Fred used to, we used to do a lot of field trips with schools, um, Chariho, that the kids were in, the middle school? And we used to hire a school bus and they would take the class down to the Point and they thought that was the coolest thing. We'd take them on a tour of the boat and we would take them, oh, into where the lobsters are, well, the old co-op. The co-op was probably still in existence then, or maybe it was leaving, but we would take the kids in there, and he would always say to the kids because the kids would write thank you notes, and they had these cute pictures that they drew. One little boy had like his nose on, his fingers on his nose, and (laughs) because of the smell. And so whenever they would say to him it was stinky, Fred would always say that's the smell of money.

AC : They're like, "Oh, really? Okay!" I bet that probably converted a few young fishermen; that got a few fishermen.

PM : Yes, some of them were like "Yeah, this is cool.", the rest were "Awww," you know, "I don't want to do that."

AC : Is there no more of that sort of thing happening with school groups, or tourists who want to...?

PM : Well, we did that for a number of years, and then we quit doing it because the kids were moving on, but we loved that, Fred loved that. Showing kids what that life is, because that was back in a time when fishing was, it was just a different game then, than it is now, and now maybe other people are experiencing that in fishing still. I don't know, because we're at a different point in that industry.

AC : Mmm-hmm, you've walked the whole spectrum, it sounds like. Crew members? Did he, how many crew members did he have, do you know? Did that change?

PM : Oh dear Lord. Well in the very beginning we used to have a steady crew, and we had a good crew, and some of the guys were there ten years with us. But then, what started to happen was the crews changed down at the Point. They weren't as, they were more transient, tended to be the kind: big paycheck, don't see them again. When the paycheck's gone, they're back on the dock looking for work. So we started to have transits, more and more transits towards the end, like at the end of the year when I would be putting together the 1099s, I had up to twenty-two crewmen through the year. Yeah.

AC : This was in the last years of fishing for you guys?

PM : That was the latter part of the years, that it was just a turnover, turnover, turnover. And then it was just hard to find, Fred runs a tight ship, and he doesn't want any kind of fooling around on that boat. He's got a reputation, he's on the Board of Directors for

the insurance company and he was like, "You got to follow the rules", zero tolerance, you know, for any kind of drugs, alcohol, anything like that. And you would get guys that didn't respect that. In fact, the fire happened because a kid that we had wasn't really that dependable, ran back onto the boat late at night, had been gone off to have a couple drinks, ran back to the boat to get his cigarettes off his bunk, and he dragged the blanket from the bunk with him and didn't realize it, and it caught on top of the heater, that's where they found the fire started, so.... You know, that's the kind of stuff, that wasn't like Fred was out fishing and we had some random fire in the engine.

AC : I gotcha.

PM : So that's what you're dealing with, you know? I think there has been a big loss of professionalism down there.

AC : What's caused that, is that just the times, the economy, is it sort of bigger forces or is there something in fisheries that might've led to that?

PM : Yeah, I think just, you know, because maybe they weren't making as much money anymore, you weren't getting the families that were keeping the next generation to come in. I mean, some fishing was so bad sometimes. The guys would have a check for \$100. They've been out there working, they've been out there working, and we didn't, we'd try to give them \$500 or something but we couldn't afford that because the trip wasn't there. So, I mean, it was getting bad, and you can't ask, who was going to want to go work for nothing?

AC : And that was over the last couple of years?

PM : That was probably the last ten or so. I'm guessing the last ten on a lot of those things, but I mean, summertime, fishing was terrible. You know, or quotas were met, shut down.

AC : What was he fishing for, over the last ten years?

PM : He almost always was fishing for squid, for awhile we were doing butterfish, we couldn't, oh, we refinanced our house everything, so he could put a whole big freezer unit in the boat, that cost us a fortune. Well, that only provided us for maybe a year or two, of good fishing and that was butterfish. Then the butterfish market dropped because the fat content of the butterfish wasn't as high as what the Japanese wanted, they were getting their market elsewhere. So now we had a big freezer boat, I mean that helped a little bit with freezing squid, because you can at least hold on to a frozen product until the market comes up, but you can't hold on to the fresh.

AC : Is that a different market, I wonder, is it a different buyer in the case of frozen squid versus...?

PM : Yeah, well I think it's because whoever's buying it can then store it, or until the need is there, but if it's a fresh fish it's got to go. Um, but, yeah, so I think with the crew, I think it was lean times probably was a big thing. And so, a lot of those people then just maybe started to find jobs, carpenter, or you know, things like that. So it got then, where Fred's list, it used to be like, "Ooh, I'm calling from the *Travis & Natalie*, you want to go?" "Yeah!" Then it got to be like, you would go down the list and nobody would want to go. You know? So, then it was really hard finding a crew.

AC : Right, and he can't go without the crew, is that right? Because the boat is big...

PM : No, he can't go out without the crew, and you got to have a crew that knows what they're doing, and then, you run into problems over the years with injuries. I mean if the person doesn't pay attention on the boat, you know, they can get injured. So that was, you know, many phone calls. They'd be in Cape May, and we'd get a phone call. Well we had a trip planned once, we were going to Europe on the Board of Directors position he's on, with Sunderland Insurance, and we were going to extend it and go to Ireland and do all this. Well, we were leaving in a few days and we got a phone call from Cape May, because, the captain had a problem with something, and an injury and then someone else got injured. So we had to cancel everything so we had to deal with that, we didn't have anyone to run the boat.

So, you know, ugh, I mean, and I'd get a phone call because somebody had, somebody got hurt, somebody got drunk down in Cape May, he walked off the boat, now I got to find a crewman to get on, you know, a train and set that up so he can take a train down there and get on the boat, and rent a car so they can come back, I mean it was like, such a pain in the neck, you know? It wasn't like the old days when you just had your crew and they knew what to do, and they were responsible. That was when Fred, I think, loved fishing. He remembers good times they'd go into Nantucket, they'd go into Martha's Vineyard and they would laugh and have fun and probably get drunk. But you know, they'd had a good day fishing, and, but it wasn't that way at the end, and he admitted that, you know, that it was getting to be too much for him to deal with all that.

AC : Was it also that he was coming into a place in his own life where you should be thinking about maybe retiring, maybe just, you know, going on to other things, I mean did he ever, you know, with getting older, you, does it take a physical toll?

PM : Yeah well, you know what? He didn't, yeah, well a lot of it too is he started to not, once he got off the boat for a little while and then he had to go back, you know, he realized it was very fatiguing for him. I mean he's still big and strong, but you know, he is diabetic and being out there in the stress, his sugar levels would go up and then he started to have problems with vertigo. Then he started to get a fear of going on the boat because he was afraid he'd have a vertigo attack out there and it was bad, and I was worried

about that. So, you know, it's not, you're not old, but your body does take, it takes a toll being out to sea all those years.

So, it wasn't as fun for him anymore and it was, you had to plug away, plug away, plug away, plug away out there. And, you know, just barely for nothing, and so I mean, that's not fun, you know? He just didn't want to be away like that anymore. But it was hard for him to say that that part of who he is, I think he was very defined by what he did, so it was very hard for him to be able to walk away, and I kept saying, "Oh, we are going to have you know, 'I sold the boat party' you know, when that thing is finally gone I am going to be dancing a jig as that sails away."

And he was like, "But I'm not Pat, I'm going to be sad about that because that's our boat."

I said, "I know, I know that, but for me it's been hell for the last so many years, I don't want it anymore, I'm going to feel like..." and you know what a big fear of mine was? What if something happens to him and I'm stuck with that business, what am I going to do? What am I going to do? I mean when you have a loan with National Marine Fisheries [Service] that ties everything in, they have your house, they have everything. So, if something happens on that boat and he's not there to man that, how am I going to run that thing, and manage that, and, you know, that became a fear of mine as well. Because it wasn't something you could just say, "Oh, I'll put it for sale." We had it for sale. So, you know, he got where he really wasn't that into it, but I think there was a part of him that was still the romantic side of that. And he loved that boat, you know? But I think he's getting over it, and we laughed because we were at a Red Sox game and somebody said to him, "What do you do?"

And he said, "I'm a fisherman, I own a fishing boat."

And it was funny because later on I said to him, "Yeah, you know what Fred? You said you own a boat and you're a fisherman. And I said, "I could tell that was really hard for you, you couldn't say to him, 'I used to be a fisherman'."

He said, "You're right, I couldn't." But now he says, now he says that. Now he says, "I used to own a fishing boat, I was a fisherman." So, yeah.

AC : So this has been a very big year for both of you, it sounds like.

PM : Yeah, it has been. So it's transitional, transitional, because now we're adjusting to..., oh, you know what, it's this one.

AC : We're just adjusting, some changes.

PM : Yeah, because that's my out, I'll go to.... It is transitional, because now here I am, I'm back to work full-time, he's trying to find what to..., he's not sure what to do. The safety training he loves, he's had a lot of notoriety apparently, he was on NPR (National Public Radio) with that. CBS news called him because they heard the NPR [interview], and they went down the other day to talk to him about safety training. And I think that's really good because he feels that he's still providing a service to fishermen and to the industry, keeping them safe when they're out there, but it's not a good money maker. So it's hard for him, because he's trying to rediscover where to go in the future.

AC : You have a very strong family that, I admire your adaptability, and so, it's hard for me to fathom, just sitting here in awe listening to all the things you've had to, the changes you've been through. How about social circles in terms of..

PM : Fishing?

AC : Yeah, has that changed, have you, were fishermen and their families a part of your lives?

PM : Oh, it was fun back in the day, was, it was. Well the co-op had a big, I don't even know what it was, if it was a scholarship, fundraising, or whatever, but it was at the Quonset Officer's Club and I was good friends with a lot of fisherman's wives. Whoa, we had a blast, we used to go up to the expo in Boston and we'd go to this big dance, and you knew everybody and it was fun.

AC : And when did that change?

PM : Oh, well the co-op went out of business, so that ended, that part. I think I really started to distance myself, too, from the Point. I was busy with the kids, the kids were young, I didn't live in Narragansett anymore, we kind of moved away from the Point to get away from all of that, people dropping in, and you know. So, being in the town of Richmond, my kids were in a different school system, so your social life starts to revolve around their activities, their sports, parents you're meeting there. But, I remember early on in fishing, you know, the families, like I said the Follett's and the Barlows, can't even think of all the names, but you know, it was fun back then, it was fun back then.

AC : Now in the last, say, three years, were there any changes in terms of social circles and your involvement with other families...?

PM : I don't see....

AC : Or was it more longer term?

PM : Yeah, that was a long time ago when we were all real close, and up until maybe when my daughter was probably maybe around ten or so, and so that was twenty years ago.

And then, I just think everybody started to kind of go their own ways. Fred doesn't have that camaraderie down there himself at the Point like he did. Few, a few of the old guys, but you know, it was always kind of tough for Fred because Fred was always so involved in so many different things, and sadly a lot of the fishermen resented that. They felt that he was self-serving, and you know, if they only knew, if they only knew that really, he always put himself last. It was more about everybody else and how he would save them, and save their fishing, and save, you know. But they looked at him, like, and I think some of it was jealousy, and oh God, then he got that Alka Seltzer commercial, they..., do you remember that?

AC : No.

PM : Oh yeah, well, they decided that they would do fishermen, and so they went along the east coast and they went down to Galilee and they went around to boats and they gave them samples of Alka Seltzer and then they came back around and they said, "Well, how did you like the Alka Seltzer?" Well, some of the guys were kind of fresh about it, "I didn't even try it" or whatever.

Well Fred goes, "My wife swears by that, and we always use Alka Seltzer." because we did, and they were like, "Cool, and you sound good." You know? So they picked him with a couple of other fishermen and that was a gravy train; I loved that. I used to call him on the boat and be like, "Guess what? We got like \$5,000 in the mail from the commercial!"

AC : That's fabulous.

PM : So that ran like a couple of years, but, you know, that was another thing that the guys at the Point were like, Hollywood, they called him "Hollywood". Because Fred was able to, even as a fisherman, look good. He was one of the few fishermen that didn't smell like fish, and didn't look like fish and looked good. So of course they would harass him about that, I think sometimes anybody who was successful, anybody who puts himself out in politics, whatever, people loved to criticize you, you know? And it hurt Fred, I think it hurt Fred a lot for a lot of years, because he felt like they were his comrades and they turned their back on him. And that was hard for me to try and keep him, you know, his spirits up.

But I always tried to tell him, "That's not your life, that's a job. I know it's a way of life, but it isn't your life, your life is with me. Your life is with the kids, it's us. So you need to stop putting them first and stop putting that industry first." And so that, that was hard, I fought that battle for a long time, you know?

AC : Did the kids also encourage him to be more involved in their lives, was it coming from them as well, or was it sort of...?

AC : Yeah, and well, when they were little it was hard because he would call and he would say, "I'm on my way home" and the kids were little and we'd be sitting for dinner, Daddy's coming home but then Daddy didn't come home because he'd get caught up at the Point, and then that was back in the day when [Milts] was there, and what was the other place that was down there, the [Focsule], that was a big way of life. Kind of like in "The Perfect Storm" in that movie, where everybody would go and hang out there, well he would go by there and "Hey Fred, come on in and have a drink." "Yeah, I'll have one". Well that was common down at the Point. And there were a lot of marriages that were broken up, fishing, because the husband wasn't home or the husband was, when he was home, was down there, and the wife got sick of it. You know, and I got sick of it plenty of times, but I think Fred and I just have always been meant to be together, and we would somehow get through it, and survive it, but you know, it wasn't easy.

AC : Now, was his family ever close, geographically?

PM : Yeah, they were right here in Cranston.

AC : Were you close to them when the kids were growing up or was that just difficult, in-laws are always maybe a little difficult, it's not your own family.

PM : Yeah, they really weren't supportive of him being a fisherman, number one, when he started to be successful, when he was a highliner we went up to the World Trade, right? It was the World Trade Center, not World Trade Center, what's it called in Boston? The, it is a Trade Center, but it's not the World Trade Center, something.

AC : I know what you're talking about, sure; a significant event, it sounds like.

PM : But we went up there, and you know, his father was very proud of him, and I think that his family became proud late, later. But you know, Fred was the first son of an Italian family that was really only first generation. His parents were first generation, so it was a big deal for Fred to go off to college and it was very disappointing for them when he left college. He didn't have long to finish, and he left to be a fisherman, it was like what's up with that? But then, like I say, once he became successful in the industry, they loved that. But they just were doing their thing, they were never, they never were helpful really, with me, with the children. I pretty much relied on my family, even though they were in Pennsylvania, they would always, you know, come and help.

AC : Pennsylvania seemed closer than Cranston for reasons.

PM : And I had a best friend who lived right down the street from me, and she helped me a lot.

AC : And Natalie is in, doing, fashion, in the fashion industry, is that right?

PM : She works for *People Style Watch* magazine, she's director of their beauty department, she is very successful, she went to Hofstra, got a business degree, and she said she always wanted to go to New York City. I mean, she didn't as a little kid, but then when she got older, and she went to Hofstra, she said "I'm going to go to New York City. I'm going to live in the city."

I'm like, "Really? We live in the country, that's going to be an adjustment." But God bless her, she went to the city, and she didn't you know, she didn't have a job or anything, she went to a temp agency, they sent her out to *Lucky* magazine, which was an up-and-coming magazine, and she was an assistant, and it was like a *Devil Wears Prada* situation, she had one of those publishing bosses that would make her run out for toast, and it had to be the crusts cut off, and only toasted so much, but yeah.

So she rose from that, she went to, she went from there to, was that, *Figure* magazine, then she went from *Figure* magazine to *OK* magazine, then she went, she won "Salesperson of the Year", she beat out salesperson at *Oprah*, *Martha Stewart*, [and] *People* magazine, and then the phone calls were coming in. And *Elle* magazine wanted her, so she went to *Elle*. She didn't like *Elle*, because it was very aspiring fashion, she said, the people were very snotty and she didn't like that at all. And then *People* magazine called her, wanted her for their *Style Watch* magazine, she went there and now *Vogue* calls, wanting her because she just is unbelievable in her sales. So she's been very, very successful, lived in the city for ten years, she just recently moved out.

AC : She's, are they married, is she married, with kids?

PM : No, she's getting close. She's been dating this fellow for two years, and it's not easy to meet someone in the city. She said it's weird, when you go out in the city, the guys are a lot of Wall Street guys, very full of themselves. "What do I have? What do I...?" She doesn't want that kind of a guy; she wants somebody who's real. So she met this guy, a friend of a friend and they're very happy. So Fred of course, being the Dad, says, "Well, if this guy doesn't get a ring out soon, you know, I'm going to have to have a talking with him."

And I'm like, "No, you don't talk to him about that, that's her business." But they're happy, so, and Travis is engaged, so....

AC : Maybe grandchildren will be in your future?

PM : Someday, hopefully I'm not going to be too old to enjoy my grandchildren.

AC : That's wonderful, very nice. Do you have a little bit more time?

PM : Yeah, yeah.

AC : Okay, so tell me a little bit more if you can about well-being. Now this is sort of your quality of life and your outlook on life, whether that's, for you or for Fred or for both of you if you want to comment for him, for you especially, how has that changed? I mean you've had all these changes in your life, how does that affect sort of your overall outlook on life, is it better? Is it worse? How does fisheries influence that the last few years? Maybe the last couple years especially, before he retired? I know it's hard to separate all the other things happening in life, but if you could kind of just give me a sense of that.

PM : Well, as tough as fishing was, with being a fisherman's wife, I'm glad, I am really happy I had that experience, because I'm not afraid to be alone, I'm not afraid if something happens, I mean we have to face the fact that you're getting older. Me dealing with the elderly, I see what life can be like in the seventies. That's not far away from me. But I'm not fearful because I know how to take care of things, I know how to manage things, so, it taught me not to be afraid to be alone. I think a lot of women, maybe a lot of people have a fear of being alone, and I don't, so that's a good thing from fishing. It's taught me a lot of that, I don't have any regrets about that, and neither does Fred, you know, and I think now it's just, we're just trying to find our way, we're just trying to find our way because I think Fred feels frustrated because he doesn't know really what to do and where to put his focus, and we're trying to find that time again for us to enjoy each other, enjoy time.

I'm starting to see a lot of people coming into the retirement, you know, era, which we really can't, because the latter part of fishing was not enough money to put away for pensions, and so, you know, it's trying to rebuild that. It's not like you're a teacher and you can retire, and you're all set. So he's trying to find his way. You know, I'm kind of under the gun with this job pressure of staying there because I need to have healthcare so, but, you know, when we're together and it's a weekend, we still have, you know, fun together and have a great relationship and a happy family, so that's good, I mean....

AC : So your overall outlook on life and well-being seems to be, you are in a good place, then, would you say?

PM : Yeah, it is a good place, I mean, I would like to not be working full-time, I would like to do, it's mostly one part of my job that I'm kind of burned out already on, is the activities part. So Fred has to listen to me a lot in the morning, he wakes up in a good mood, I don't, because I know what I'm in for, and it's so funny because he wakes up, he's so used to being his own boss. I said to him, "You don't realize what it's like when you have a job that you have to be there, and you can't leave until you can, you know, it's time to leave, you don't just make appointments during the day because you can't. You can't take vacation unless you have accrued your vacation, and so, you know, we laugh because he gets up in the morning and then I'm leaving for work, and he says,

"Have fun!"

I'm like, "Fun?!"

AC : "I'm going to work, it's not terrible, but it's not necessarily fun."

PM : Right, and well because he really has never experienced that pushing a time clock kind of thing, he's always made his own decisions and I think that's a hard thing for him right now, is to even contemplate working for anybody else. Wants to always be independent, so that's probably the biggest adjustment we have right now is because he's trying to find a career and you know, I'm in one that I have to say I really like what I do, I feel good about what I do everyday I make somebody's life better, not a lot of people can say that about their job. So that's a good thing, it's just I miss... Fred and I were travelling, we were doing what we wanted to do, and I'm more restricted. So that's probably the only thing right now that's kind of hard for us.

AC : Okay. And, do you, or is there anything you do know about sectors in terms of how they worked and, is there any sort of thoughts, or is that just sort of a foreign subject?

PM : Yeah, you know, by that, what I'll say about that, is by that time in fishing I don't want to know. (laughs) I don't want to know.

AC : You would close that door if he started talking about it.

PM : Yes. Because I couldn't listen anymore to number one, the regulations, because I know that's a regulation on a certain level. I, Fred always remained positive about, "Oh this is going to be a good thing, oh this is going to be a good thing. I'm..., oh, it sounds good, Jack Reid is going to help us on this. Sheldon Whitehouse is going to help us on this." And you know, I have to say to him, and then I felt like I was just getting too negative because I was like, "You know, what, Fred, I've been listening to that for twenty-some years, you come back from every meeting and say, 'Looking good' and it never looks, it doesn't happen, it doesn't...", I don't know. I can't tell you really one thing positive about regulations. And I think that was basically a dividing off, of the ocean, right? Sectors, and you've got a sector, and you, you know....

AC : Right, I remember you could chose to be a member in a group and they were sort of self-managed.

PM : Yeah, and you paid.

AC : And you had to pay to become a member.

PM : Yeah, so he was paying for that, whether he got anything out of that, I don't know.

AC : So you never really saw any direct increases in your income from it, or, there wasn't anything substantial that you could see from your end, from it?

PM : No, and I could be wrong, but you know what? When I started working, also too, is I said I'm not the book-keeper anymore.

AC : Okay. So four years ago?

PM : Yup, he had to take over, he took over the books.

AC : He did? Did he hire someone to do it?

PM : Well no, he just did it poorly (laughs). He didn't hire anybody, he just did it poorly. So then what happened was I was doing book-keeping before I left for work, and I was doing book-keeping on weekends and I was doing book-keeping when I got home from work. So then I was just like, you know.... Then I just stopped doing it and when things would come in I would just open it up, and I would leave it, and I would go, "Here you go." So I really, I couldn't, I couldn't know anymore, I couldn't, because I have enough to know for my job. I couldn't lay in bed at night and worry about that. So I really kind of washed my hands. And if he got a phone call about something I would actually go in the other room. I don't want to know.

AC : Didn't want to hear it.

PM : I don't want to know, I don't want to hear it, and that was around the sector time, and to me it was one more thing for him to get involved in, to pay money to either fight some battle to protect the fishermen that isn't going to work (laughs).

AC : Yup. Now, at that point, right before he retired, you don't have to tell me numbers, but, percentage-wise, what was his income contributing to your household, and what was yours, was it 50-50? Was he contributing more or less, just to kind of get a sense of how....

PM : When we still had the boat?

AC : Yeah, right before he retired and had the boat, would you say, because you were working full-time, right, so how did that lay-out in terms of percentages?

PM : You know, at the end it was, it actually started to do well again. I don't know if that was squid, I don't remember, but a lot of times we just wouldn't take a pay, because we had to pay other things.

AC : Okay, so he was contributing, fishing was contributing...?

PM : Wasn't contributing that much, I mean it still was paying for our healthcare, eeking out the healthcare. But there were just, you know, it's just like, if the budget of your house is higher than what's coming in. So what was happening for us, it was more like pay-off [some], pay off Rhode Island engine, pay off... we won't take a pay this time, so that's kind of what it got to be like. Even if it was coming in, it wasn't coming into our house, because we had to get back on track with the boat.

AC : Now at that time, did your work pay for insurance, health insurance?

PM : Yes.

AC : It did.

PM : As soon as I started, I got it.

AC : Full-time, you were able to get health insurance?

PM : Yeah, I got immediate health care.

AC : Which is, like you said, very significant.

PM : It is very, because I was out looking for jobs, and you know what, and that's another thing....

AC : Tell me.

PM : I thought I would like to write a book, because so many women....

AC : Please do!

PM : ... think that being home doesn't make you marketable when you want to go back into the work force. And you know? I learned the computer, I had computer skills, I knew book-keeping, all the volunteer work and stuff I did, that I actually helped people in the office that have worked for the last thirty years but they don't know computers, and I know from working on the books and being self-taught. But you know what? You don't lose by being at home, and being a mom and helping your husband in a business, you still are marketable and I really thought that was a good thing, that when I went out and I was so afraid because you hear all the stories of like, when you go out and they're, "Oh, we don't need you, you have no value." And I found out I do have value, and I can still work, you know? Being out in the working world, as a woman in her fifties, learning from life, learning from living, learning from the business, you know? So, you know, I think that's something women need to know, that you can still do it.

AC : Did Fred always encourage you to seek your own career when you were ready, or was it, "Don't leave me! Don't leave me with all this!"?

PM : You know what? At first I don't think he really wanted me..., he liked me always being there for him, and being there when he came home. I treated him like a king, when he came home, because he was busting his butt out there fishing. So when he came home, it was, "Here, give me your dirty laundry, here's a good meal, take a nap, everything is done for you." And I think in a way, like friends of mine would laugh and then go, "You know, you're creating a monster because now he's going to want this all the time." And it was an adjustment when I went back to work because he was used to me doing everything and I was like, "I can't do that anymore, I can't have the yard and the gardens and the meals and the house like it used to be, I can't." And that was hard, the first couple of years. Now he's trying to be more aware, he's working in the yard, now he never used to work in the yard. He likes it. And it's nice, because he was never around to do it, you know? And it's cute, because now he fixes up the shed, and cleans out the garage and likes to work in the yard, so I think he's enjoying that part of it, but..., where were we going with that?

AC : Women getting back to the work force and them being of value and then you sort of went into Fred's..., treating him, you know, doing all that for him, but now he's found his rhythm. So he didn't encourage you right away to get back into the work force?

PM : No, he liked me being home, there were times when times were lean, when times were lean and then I would feel guilty because he would come home and, "Oh, I talked to so-and-so and his wife is bringing home this, and bringing home that.", you know what I mean? And then I'd feel like, but then I would say to him, "but you have to understand, if I do, your life will change. I cannot be your full-time book-keeper. I can't run around for you. I'm not going to wait on you hand and foot. I can't be available for you 24-7, if I have a job." So fine. So then he'd be like, you know..., and then fishing would pick up a little bit and then it would be fine and he was happy. But then, I think just towards the end when fishing was bad and we, you know, suspected that at some point he would get out, but it was just bad, I had to be working. I had to get a job. But when I would go out to work, number one, nobody wants to pay healthcare and nobody wants to pay you. You don't get a lot of money.

AC : Does him being a diabetic influence healthcare coverage or not at all?

PM : Oh, he needs a lot of healthcare.

AC : So was there people that just said, "We're not insuring you, because..."

PM : No, not that, it's just most, I was going to like, doctor's offices because I was an old, what do I do, because now I was a social worker, but you can't be called a social worker now, unless you have a Master's. I looked into going back to school, I have a Bachelor's

degree, but, so I looked to going back to school, I thought about maybe becoming a dental hygienist, I always thought I would want to do that, and they get paid good money, and they have a flexible schedule, but then when I found out what schooling... ughh... it entailed, like my dentist, I talked to her, and she was like, "Oh, that's a great profession and blah blah blah." And then she said, "Well, just work on, how many sciences do you have?" I was like, "Not many, I hate science."

AC : You have to start from the very beginning?

PM : Yeah, so I was like, "Okay, I am not doing that." So then I was starting, I thought, "Okay, I was a book-keeper, I'll go out and look for book-keeping jobs, or working in a... I was a receptionist, I was this" so but then when you go, it's doctors offices, it's things like that, they don't want to pay you anything and they don't want to give you healthcare. So I was getting frustrated and, because I just didn't know, should I go back to school, where am I going to work? And then like I say, that friend of mine, you know, told me about the adult day and I beat out a lot of women, in that position, number one because I had an opportunity to go in there, and they saw how I was with the people. But a lot of it was because I had volunteered a lot in nursing homes, and my singing, I use music therapy, you know, like I say. Then transitioning into the case management, I had the degree so I could do that. I had the computer skills from doing the books, you know, so it was kind of like all those things wrapped up together made me who I was at that time. And that's the good thing about working now, is because so much was about Fred, all my marriage, between the commercials and the TV and news and blah blah blah, it was always Fred, Fred, Fred. I was always Fred's wife, you know? And I think a lot of women can experience that too, where you know they sort of feel like they lose their identity. Fred's a very strong character and personality, so, you know, this has been good for me and the fact that I realized, "Wow, I'm still smart! I'm still sharp. I can be really good at something." You know? Still. And that has been a good thing.

AC : That sounds really..., your kids must be proud of you too.

PM : You know? And like I say, it's wonderful, what we do, I mean, adult day services. People don't really understand what they are. But they keep more and more of the elderly at home so that they're not institutionalized, because people that are working, trying to take care of Mom, and so Mom comes to us all day, and they have a wonderful place that they can be with their peers and they laugh and have fun, and it's very rewarding work, but it takes a lot of your energy. So what I'd like to do, my goal now is to be just a part-time case manager, and not be on the floor, the two days doing activities. So that's kind of, so I've actually just gave Fred a deadline (laughs), I said to him, "Why don't you in the next year, come up with some work that you can get some healthcare, or make enough money to pay for healthcare, that then I can just do the three days case management? We can have more time together. I'm not exhausted." I go to bed at eight-thirty, nine o'clock at night, I am so burned out. And he misses me, I know he misses me, but I'm like, I can't, it's just I can't, not now, not with this.

AC : So that's kind of, quite a year, you guys might be cruising around the, taking some little, much-needed time together.

PM : You know what? We met a lot of people in Europe because of Fred being on that board, and we made a lot of friends, and they're like, I haven't seen some of them in like four years now, five years.

AC : And they are friends, you'd consider them as friends, that's great. You could stay with them if you went to travel there?

PM : Yeah, but I can't go there now because I have so little time of a vacation, and I have a mother who I want to see, but I've got to drive to Pennsylvania to see her. I have a son in Seattle, if I want to see him I've got to go over the air, how many days is that going to take? Natalie's out of state, so, you know, most of the time that I use for vacation is not for me to take a vacation, it's for me going to see my children, going to see my mother or obligations. So there's no time for me, and I feel like as a woman I, my whole life was raising the kids, managing the house, being the fisherman's wife, you know taking care of the business and now it's taking care of other people's parents. I can't hardly even see my mother and I'm helping everybody else's mothers and fathers, you know, which is a good thing.

I feel like, kind of that karma, that I'm helping other people's parents and somebody is going to be good to my Mom, you know? But it's like, you know, I'm coming into that age, I mean it's not that old, but you're coming to that point in your life where you want to start to have some time to just do our thing. But like I say, I don't mind doing the case management, I like that, but physically and mentally keeping them entertained for seven hours, nobody knows how draining that is, you know, until you do it, it's really tough.

AC : I can't even imagine. Do you have a good team that supports you there?

PM : Yeah, we have a good team there, we have a good team. It's just it's a big responsibility with..., and I did that for a whole year. When I first took that job I was Activities Facilitator, it was a lower salary but I did it for the healthcare. And, I did it thinking that eventually the boat will sell. But even with the boat sold [it] doesn't mean you're on easy street, because then you've got all your capital gains, and you've got the depreciation and the capital construction, so the government took a large portion of what we got from that boat, which is another sad thing. That he put that much time into a business and the government gets all that money?

AC : Did he keep the permits, or did he sell...?

PM : No, he sold, nobody wants a boat without your permits.

AC : So he sold it with the permits.

PM : He had to sell it with the permits. So, but anyway....

AC : Was it a huge loss in terms of financial?

PM : No, we didn't lose, we came out with something, but not, to me, what you should have after as many years as Fred's put in. But, you know, we walked away, we got out, number one, and number two, we got out with something. So that's okay. But, you know, when I started in that job I thought it was just going to be maybe a year or so, now I'm four years down the road. But after one year, the case manager left, and so I presented myself to the director, and I said, "I've got the degree, I have the experience, I know the business, I know the clients, I'm going to proposition you," which is not easy in a municipality, but I said, "I can do both jobs, I can do the case management job, and I'll do the activities job, and it's best to break that activities up, because it's a burn-out job, and hire somebody three days a week for the other days. I'll do that too, and I'll be the case manager the other, and I won't even ask for a raise until you see what I can do."

AC : Wow, you go girl.

PM : They went and they said, they said, okay. And when I got into the case management it was, a lot of problems and stuff which I had to figure out, and so (...) I really felt good about that, I was like, "Hey, it's my time." I'm not making a ton of money, believe me, but you know, that made me feel really good.

[01:31]:

[Period of substantial coughing by interviewee, about 4 minutes].

AC : The position, that you could do it?

PM : Exactly.

AC : Sure, build some confidence.

PM : And when I took over the case management, it had been sorely neglected and there were a lot of issues, and I took control of that, and I fixed it and I worked it out and I have been, you know, fund-raising. I've raised all this money for the adult day, it doesn't sound like a lot but I've raised about over \$5,000, which is a lot.

AC : To go into their activities and their..., so you could have entertainers come in?

PM : Well no, I bought things like a ComfortCare recliner. We had an old hospital bed in there, we got that, wheelchairs, we do, I mean, they don't like me to say that, but we really didn't have a lot of wheelchairs. If we have a fire in here getting people out, so we got new wheelchairs, we got, we had an old broken chalkboard that we used, I got a nice new whiteboard, I got, what else? Oh, for our new addition I got the blinds on the windows, I raised the money for that, we got a big 55-inch flat-screen TV, Flint Audio over here gave us a good deal and a Blu-Ray player so if we wanted to do things like that, so in the finance department in the town they're like, "Wow, cool, you just keep bringing in the money." I got some more money coming in September from a church, so we'll put that towards something, but so, you know, when I took that over I felt really good about that accomplishment, you know? And they were willing to, like I say, in a municipality nothing moves quickly, nothing changes, they created a new position for me so that I could be full-time and get healthcare and get off the floor because I said I won't last. I'm a high-energy person and I'm a hard worker and if it's burning me out, it's going to burn other people out, so that made me feel good. I mean I've had a lot of really good accomplishments there that I can feel good about myself, so that's a good part about where I am. I didn't have that, because it was all about Fred, it really was. You know, Fred and my kids, and so I try when I'm driving to work to think about that, you know, and it won't be forever, so....

AC : Okay. And just to sort of wrap it up, is there a story or a thought or something you'd want to share for the archive, a memory or something that sticks out about your life? It doesn't have to be an event, it could just be, you know, just a thought to end on, something, or maybe there's something I haven't asked that I should have asked about your life, and how things have been going for you and your family?

PM : Well, you know, I am a very faithful person, a very spiritual person. I was raised that way as well, and I do feel very blessed, I feel very blessed in life, I have a wonderful family, I had wonderful parents and sisters, I do believe Fred is my soul-mate. We were born on the same day, the same year. And we met, we met on- this is a cute story-we met on probably the second day of college and I had an English class to go to. I didn't know where I was going at URI, I didn't know anybody there. I went to the wrong building. And when I went back to the dorm, everybody was like, "Oh my God, we have assignments." I'm like "I didn't even make it to my class because I got to the wrong building." I was so nervous and upset. And the next time I was to go to the class it was a Tuesday, I was so nervous I walked into the class, Fred was there, and I looked at him and I said, "This guy is going to be nice, this guy will help me." And when I walked in, he said, "She's beautiful and I'm going to marry her." Isn't that funny? And I went in and I sat next to him and the rest is history, as far as, we've been together since then. I mean, you know, we had our little ups and downs but we've been together since then, so, I think it is love at first sight. And when I looked at him and I thought, "He's somebody I can trust." That's my gut feeling, and he has been, and he is my soul mate, and I believe that I was kind of led to him, and we have wonderful children and we have a marriage that we're celebrating tomorrow for 39 years. And we have been through hell and back

again with the industry and his career, but you know, we always were together and we always helped each other and we always supported each other. And so I feel very lucky, and I think that a lot of what happens in your life it is meant to be, I think you're on a path and you know, you have to try and go with that flow and not fight it, and I think in your youth you spend a lot of time fighting with things that are happening in your life, but when you look back it had a purpose. It had a purpose in building who you are and where you're going. And so I feel very lucky to have that. And that's my story.

AC : I couldn't think of a better way to end this oral history, thank you Patricia. So just to close, I've been here with Pat Mattera and it's the 29th, the 31st, excuse me, of August 2012, thank you so much for your time.

PM : Oh, you're welcome.

END INTERVIEW

[01:42:35]