

Name of person interviewed: Shareen Davis [SD]

Facts about this person:

Age 50

Sex Female

Occupation Shore support; owns weir fishing business; past fisherman; community activist.

If a fisherman,

Home port, Chatham, MA

and Hail Port Chatham, MA (Stage Harbor)

Residence (Town where lives) Chatham, MA

Ethnic background (if known) 13th generation Cape Codder

Interviewer: Madeleine Hall Arber

Transcriber: Azure Dee Westwood [ADW]

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INDEX/KEYWORDS

KEYWORDS

Community organizations; activism; weir fishing; pure fisheries; Hook Association; family involvement in fishing; daughters fishing; Monomoy; digging clams; Chatham; shucking scallops; loss of shore support infrastructure; alternatives to fishing; Stage Harbor; Chatham Fish Pier; political involvement; women role models; D.C. lobby; dredging issues; gear type differences dividing town; gentrification; new fishing family support group.

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- [46:50] [End of interview]

TRANSCRIPT

[Start of Audio]

[00:00]

[XX]: ... You have to press play. Which is not... my machine you press play and it plays it back. So that threw me off. But it's recording now and I can hear your voice ok. So why don't you introduce yourself.

[SD]: OK. I'm Shareen Davis, from Chatham, Massachusetts.

[XX]: How did you, well let's see. Are you from Chatham originally, were you born there?

[SD]: Yes.

[XX]: And are you from a fishing family?

[SD]: My grandfather was a fisherman and my uncles. My mom worked in the industry when she was younger. My father. I mean everybody kind of worked, so yes. Yes.

[XX]: Tell me a little bit about the business that they were in.

[SD]: My grandfather was a groundfisherman and a shellfisherman. And pretty much worked anything around the water that was relevant. He stopped fishing at a certain point in his life because going over the bar, he lost his brother, going over the bar, coming home one day, he was behind him and the boat flipped end to end, so I think he stopped being an offshore fisherman and did mostly inshore stuff. Also, he was a weir fisherman, which is what my husband and I do. That has been in my family for a long time. My mother mended nets, baited gear, opened scallops growing up and did it as a business support for us when we were kids, kind of like earning extra money. My father was in construction but when things were tough, he'd always go to the water to earn a few dollars, a few extra dollars to buy groceries or even eat, pay the bills kind of thing. So my brother carried on the tradition, became a fisherman, my older brother, David. My younger brother, Ansel, went into construction, but he fished the weirs a little bit; we've all done it. I myself have done it. Scalloped and quahogged and fished on the weirs.

[XX]: Interesting. Now when your mother was working when you were starting, when you were growing up and before, it was a little unusual wasn't it, to have a woman involved?

[SD]: I think that's a big misunderstanding about women's roles in the fisheries. I think we've always been in some sort of capacity, shore-side supporters, at least. My mother did not go out on the boat. She did bait gear and mend nets she said for cigarette money when she was in high school. I particularly know and even myself, we weren't really, in my family, women were not allowed around the water. It was kind of... my grandfather just didn't like to see his wife down on the shore. My mother never really... we never went around the fishing boats at all, or she would drag us over to Monomoy. We could walk from Stage Island, which was just a part of Chatham, and walk before there was a break in Monomoy, walk to Monomoy and dig clams. We'd do it as a family, kind of thing, for dinner.

[03:17]

[SD]: There was a scallop shucking shanty in the back of the house that was always active in the Fall. Those kinds of things are what my mother did.

[XX]: So why did your grandfather object to women being around the boats?

[SD]: Because he was a sexist, more than likely, in all honesty. Women were bad luck. Women were not considered an entity that belonged in a male-dominated industry, on the water. But could certainly mend nets, bait gear, open scallops, to assist in the heavy times of,

you know, like a season of fishing. So you saw that, definitely. So I really didn't grow up around the boats so much. My brother had the opportunities and I think it was, you know, the nature of the time, the generation, of just coming up before women were considered of any value, so to speak. My own husband, I remember him telling me one time... I really thought that I would be very interested in all the politics that were going on with the fisheries, and expressed some interest when the first Magnuson Stevens stuff was going on in the late-70's – expressed some interest in working with some of the people about it. I remember Ernie saying to me, "Nobody around the shore is going to take you serious." And for me, usually what happens is, somebody tells me "no, you can't do it" that's just fuel for the fire. And he didn't mean it in a derogatory way, it's just the nature of the culture, I think, around the fact that women... since then, I would go on a scallop boat with my brother or with Ernie always doing that kind of stuff. That was....

[XX]: Was your family, they weren't immigrants; they were here for several generations?

[SD]: My mother's family is Nickerson, which is the founding family of Chatham. So we're, I don't know if I'm 13th generation Nickerson in the community. My dad is from Maine and his family were farmers and doctors and teachers. So he came down here when his mother divorced and that's how my parents met. And my dad was a construction worker, and he worked on boats; he did whatever he could; he did a lot of labor in different ways but ended up in the construction industry. So we always say that he kind of cleaned up the gene pool, coming to the Cape. Because Nickerson's are, I'm related back to the founding family three different ways, which makes it quite interesting.

[06:13]

[XX]: Fascinating. So what was it like to grow up with sort of facing the sea and being... did it affect the rhythms of your life at all?

[SD]: Well you know I think as a child – I had a very difficult childhood. My parents did not have a lot of money and were pretty dysfunctional, so I think a lot of what we saw was the sea itself and the harvesting of things from the sea was an opportunity to eat, number one. An opportunity to get extra money, finding extra money to pay a bill or something like that. We grew up eating quahogs and sea clam pies and chowders and fish, whatever my grandfather, Cobbie [?] would bring home and share. Oftentimes he'd bring a fish home and we'd have that. So growing up, I didn't really get that. I mean I got that people went out, but I really didn't... I lived up the street, actually, literally from where I work now, where Ernie's family owns a dock and I very rarely went down that end of the street. I would go over to the bridge and sit. To me it was more of a solace and a quietude that you would get from it, and I think that drew me in to when I wanted to go fishing and shellfishing; that I was drawn to that naturalness of being one with the, on the water and feeling the peacefulness and the solitude that you can get. That was my draw.

[XX]: So how did you and Ernie meet?

[SD]: I met Ernie in a coffee shop. A group of fishermen would come in for breakfast in the morning, and I just finished high school and I was going to the Community College and he'd come in with his buddies and they'd be cute and obnoxious and full of themselves. I definitely became very involved in... I worked in a fish market and then I worked in retail for awhile but always when the fish season for him started, then we'd all be down at the dock, packing fish, helping out as families do.

[XX]: So how did your role as an activist start? You said at first that Ernie kind of discouraged you a little bit.

[XX]: He did. The whole injustice issues that you see people dealing with or you see things happening where you know it's just not right. It was by nature how I was in high school. I was always one of the political leading kids in school, always speaking out for people; it just came as a natural occurrence for me to say, "wait a minute, something is not right. Let's see if we can do something to change it. There is a political process that people can go through."

[09:28]

[SD]: And I didn't really gain much respect in that way for a very long time. I tried joining the Fishermen's Association in town and Ernie was very open about that and quickly was pooh-poohed by all these men that thought, "Well what's she doing there? It's not a ladies night out to have dinner with your husband; this is about the real deals." So really trying to get information about what was going on was very difficult to do with people. We weren't in an internet era and it wasn't in the newspapers, it wasn't anything like that. But what ended up, my activism ended up being, it wasn't about the political process or fishing regulations, it was a dredging issue in Chatham. And the Army Corp, the Chatham Fish Pier – there's two harbors: Stage Harbor and Chatham Harbor. And we are in Stage Harbor, Ernie and I; that's where his family owns a dock and that's how we fish Nantucket Sound. But the majority of the fishing fleet fishes in Chatham, in Chatham Harbor. And that was getting shoaled in from the break. And the Army Corps had done an assessment of the fishing industry in Chatham and said you know, it would not be economically feasible to do this; the cost benefit is not there. And that statement got some press with the Town and the Town had a Committee that they were working on it. It was starting to get outrageous because people were starting to get hurt, people were falling overboard, they're trying to take skiffs to take fish in from their boats, leaving them moored in deeper water. All this stuff was going on and so a group of people went to a meeting in town with the Selectmen. And a group of women were there because all the guys were out fishing. And we got talking and said, "Hey, we can do this. We can convince the Army Corps that they are wrong." So a handful of us went ahead and pretty much did a coup d'état on a committee that was being formed in town to deal with this, and took over the committee. Came in, sat down, and said, "We're going to convince them." And we did surveys in town and we talked to businesses and said the fish buck just doesn't stop at the dock. It does into the businesses in town; it goes 2-3-fold everywhere. There's regional values to it, everything. We justified an economic value on the fishing industry at that time at \$25 million. We got attention from Congressman Studds, Senator Kennedy. All of a sudden people were using our verbage that we had.

[12:27]

[SD]: We were asked to go down to D.C. and talk to the head of the Department of the Army that oversees the Army Corps. We just made a lot of noise. And in that, two things came out. One of them being that, I had a fisherman walk up to me and say, "What are you doing?" You're south side. Your not, why are you fighting for us over in Chatham Harbor? You're south side Shareen; you guys are all that, that just doesn't make any sense to me." And that was the first moment I realized that there was a cultural difference within the community that I kind of understood but didn't really know. I knew that Ernie didn't really do much fishing over on the Harbor. His brother had a boat over there and they did go out for awhile but they mostly stayed in Stage Harbor. These two harbors are, we're just talking a mile apart. And I had to convince these fishermen that I really didn't

know, that I was actually thinking holistically about our community and not about whether, you know, one side or the other was more viable or not. The other thing, the second things that came out of that was that we got an Act of Congress to dredge the Harbor. It didn't end up coming down about numbers, but we got enough political juice behind the whole thing to have Congressman Studds put a piggy-back Bill on an Estonia Fisheries Bill and got us it, which is totally morally wrong, but it worked for us. Piggy-backed us on a Bill; it was a budgetary thing. It went on for a couple of years but we got the dredging for the Harbor. And so what I realized when I'd speak to people and get, that I could speak well, and that I could help people facilitate themselves and it garnered some respect but the more interesting thing is that it wasn't really... it was more that... if your name is in the paper, people are going to start to call you, organizations are, non-profits are, from out of your community because they know that one person has gotten... "Oh, we know someone in Chatham now." So it kind of snowballed into like Greenpeace coming in about the herring issues and other people just being contacted; the Women's Fisheries Network, speaking at that, or doing something. It's all networking, it's all just experience. So that ended up where that... that's how that happened.

[15:21]

[SD]: One of the things I have held true and probably why I haven't done more, and being a more out-spoken advocate is that I learned value from three women in town who were voices in the fisheries themselves, one of them being a fishermen's wife and a teacher, Eileen Our and the second one being Cassy Abrew who was the shellfish warden in town, and the other one being my grandmother who was the wife of a fisherman as well. My grandmother being the one that never had a voice or say about it, understanding that there were people out there that didn't really have a voice. But Cassy said to me, she said, "Shareen..." I remember bringing somebody in who wanted to write a grant to help us do something but didn't really have an idea but wanted to help, you know, one of that. So I set up a lunch with her and Cassy and me. And Cassy said to me, she goes, "Shareen, it is of no value unless the community itself wants it and seeks it itself. The value that you're seeing is other people's agendas driven by what they need to know or what they need to do."

[XX]: Very interesting.

[SD]: It was. And I've always kind of held to that in some respect. So therefore... and maybe in retrospect I should have been a little more lenient about that philosophy, but what I felt, at the time was, "hey, you know, if we need something, we'll go get it." That kind of attitude. That kind of got usurped when the Hook Fishermen came into our community. That Association usurped some of our juice and our credibility, just kind of changed how everything was being done in Chatham.

[XX]: So tell me a little bit about the relationship between the Hook Fishermen, they are outsiders that came in?

[SD]: Well, yeah. The organization was started out... they weren't technically at the beginning; it was a group of fishermen that worked together and they were all just pure groundfishermen. They wouldn't even allow somebody into the organization that did gillnetting half a year then hooked, wouldn't allow them to be involved at all. Which I thought was kind of happening in the early '90's, just after the dredging thing. So I'm hearing all this information about this new organization that's being formed and I remember my brother David who is a groundfisherman and a weir fisherman saying, "I

can't even be part of this." I thought, "Well, Jesus, that is horrible." That is not the way this community needs to be. It needs to be about small boat industry, it needs to be... let's look at it a different way. I know, yes, I understand there are people that are gillnetting and I understand, I know a lot of people don't believe in that. The nature of what Ernie and I do is so holistic that we could hold ourselves up and say we're the purest on the planet, but the bottom line is that you're speaking about a community.

[18:33]

[SD]: And I thought that was the most important thing. So that kind of... when they first started, then they hired a director and kept hearing from her, Laurie, she'd call and I was in the middle of doing some other kind of thing and I can't remember what I was doing. But I was doing work that... I was working really hard and there was no way that I could become involved in them. They wanted some... they had a connection with the Gloucester Fishermen's Wives and had written some grants, and had wanted to... "let's work on some seafood things." And all of a sudden I started hearing all of this stuff about this organization that's bringing these people in and grant money to do this and to do that. I wasn't involved. I had a traumatic experience happen to my children and I needed to be there for them and I was working and I just did not want to get involved. I really just did not want to get involved with a purist kind of organization like that, and then as that staff grew and as people did more community outreach, there was a lot of interest in bringing people in and talking about a women's fisheries organization. So when Parker came in and his girlfriend at the time Jen Dianto, and Azure Westwood wanted to start a women's group in Chatham. I said "wait a minute." And they were going to bring Angela in to consult and I said, "I don't think so, I'm sorry! We can do this, if you want to do this, why don't you ask community members to do this." So we got involved all together and formed the Nereid Network. And when we did the calendars and all the creative talent came together, it just blew right out of the water. It put some sort of face out there about Chatham, Cape Cod, but what ended up happening was it got usurped by the Hook Fishermen's Association and everybody thought that was the Hook Fishermen's Association project. And it wasn't. And they took, there were staff members that were on the Nereid's and they pretty much took the momentum from us, took and used the experiences we had with the media and attention that was being garnered and used it in their favor and kind of... I went on the Board with the Hook to see if, at that time, to see if maybe there was some way that we could change the Hook Fishermen's Association – I'm kind of not segue into this very well – into a community-based organization.

[21:31]

[SD]: I stayed with them for a year, watched some fiscal things I did not care for, I was on their Finance Committee, how they spent the money, how things were going, the lawsuit really caused a big problem because it wasn't the community of Chatham, yet they were being perceived as Chatham. It started to build some real problematic things for being part of that organization and I resigned from the Board. And when I resigned, Parker had asked me to stay on as a community liaison and I said, "No, I just philosophically do not agree." I understand. You want to have a trade organization look like it's a spokesperson for this community. I understand what you're trying to do here and I just don't like it. So in that course of events tried to work with them in other ways and it just hasn't worked out. I just feel that its unfortunate that everybody outside the community, and basically you get systematically dismissed in their world if you do not agree with what they say. If you

question, if I had any questions about not agreeing with their philosophy, not agreeing with something, then I was systematically dismissed. You do not work with people who do not have a like mind. And that has, and now, basically there is not a lot of fishermen that are involved in that organization. The organization itself has kind of shifted itself out of like the community fishing world and shifted into the wealth of the community and tapped into it for its programs. And it's kind of like stepped over, and I really feel like a lot of people on that staff have been afforded a nice lifestyle and living off the back of a lot of fishermen in the community and there is no respect there, and I just feel, I feel personally like I should have made some different decisions in how I dealt with it, but it's a matter of experience. And again, I felt, I used to take it as a ... I didn't take it as a sexist thing, but it certainly had the same kind of feel, as when I was younger. There's a groundswell again in the community to have a new women's organization stepping in, it's happening. It's happening with the fishermen behind them.

[24:24]

[XX]: So is this a broader base that's not associated with the Hook?

[SD]: Nothing to do with them. Its philosophy is that if you "got gear, you've got community." And it's not just weather you fish from a hook, a net, by rake or by hand, or you support your business is doing business. Because there has been so much of this kind of disenfranchising of the community that's just been lost. And it was just a matter of time before somebody else came up the ranks and said, "enough is enough."

[XX]: How many fishermen are left in Chatham that aren't part of the Hook Association?

[SD]: A lot. There's probably a hand... they have their gears, their sectors for the gillnetters and they have sectors for the hook fishermen. And I know they claim membership because if you're on the mailing list then you're a member, but it's my understanding that very few fishermen went to their Hookers Ball this year; there was probably a handful. There are five hundred commercial shellfish licenses in Chatham. There's probably 125 fishermen's mooring for the fish pier. And I don't think that they are representative of the community at all; I think there are probably only a handful of people that are still part of that organization. I think its Board members are – though their membership is what it is because of that. I lost my train of thought. I didn't really want this to be about that, but I think that for me, as a woman, everyday you could say you get up in the morning and you go to work, and you do something that you love, like fishing. And you get out on the water and you get out on a boat, and you have to come home to political crap; it's just worn... its wearing on you. I've changed. I've stepped outside of doing what I used to do and I'm now working for a community newspaper as a photographer and I'll still go back and fish for Ernie and I'll still do whatever I have to, but I have to move myself out of that because it's just...

[XX]: Because of the politics?

[SD]: The politics have really stressed me out. It's worn me out. I'm just so friggin' tired of it, you know?

[XX]: How about other women in the community; are there other women who actually fish? Other than shellfishermen, are there other's?

[SD]: Who are on boats still? We've got a transient community of fishing that comes in from Maine and Gloucester and New Bedford for the day boat scallops. And they're primarily in Stage Harbor. There are a couple women on the boats still. I know there are some

women lobstering. There's mostly just observers on the gillnet and groundfish boats, the groundfish boats that are left there.

[26:26]

[SD]: You're not seeing them baiting gear as much because there's not much gear to bait. There are a handful of women that are still doing it. When there's time. Yeah, shellfishing seems to be the mainstay for women in the industry. But I think we're losing that.

[XX]: Why is that?

[SD]: Well, I think we're at the bottom line, we're kind of at the bottom peg, you know, I don't know anybody that owns a boat, a woman that owns her boat. I mean I own my business with my husband and I've run my own boat to go out to the traps, back and forth, run the boats in and out, but there's not a woman captain in Chatham. It's just shore-side support and crew.

[XX]: Was there ever?

[SD]: No, but I know that there was a group of women that took a boat out once, a groundfish boat out once, just to prove that they could actually go to the fishing ground themselves, catch some fish. They were highliners at the pier that day I guess. Yeah. That was good, that was a good story. No, I don't think so. Shellfishing boats, yes. See, I think that the economic opportunities aren't there like they used to be. So I don't think a lot of women are... you have to make a choice of how much money you can make a year and if you, you know, if there are not a lot of crew opportunities, then people move on. Clamming, the clamming on Monomoy is waning so a lot of people are getting out of that. I think a lot of women go first because they are just not as financially invested into it, I guess would be the way to put it. But Chatham is waning. It certainly is. You know there are a lot of guys that bought multiple boats but still there is not a big recruitment of people, young people into the industry.

[29:27]

[XX]: How about your family?

[SD]: That's a different story. I have two daughters who have... the nature of our fish weirs are that they understand the importance of, the value of the historic and the artisanal and the ecological value of them, so Morgan, my oldest is married and she is doing all the dockside support, book-keeping, that I used to do. She stepped in and she does... Ernie's family owns a dock in Chatham and we have people offload onto that dock. We sell ice and fuel. So she oversees the billing of that. Shannon is, she's in a PhD program at the College of William and Mary, and her focus is fisheries, women in the colonial era.

[XX]: Huh, good for her.

[SD]: And so her focus... and she shellfishes, and she fishes the weirs when she's home. And her focus is the importance of fisheries in our community and how do we get more people involved and how do we keep a way of life going. How are there other ways to structure that so that it might not be from the value of the fish coming over the dock, but there might be other ways to do that. So that's her focus. And she loves the water. And she was my baby who hated going down to the dock, hated the smell of it, "yuck, mommy!" She hated it. And I never thought she would end up being more of an integral part of it, and she is. She's developed rapport and relationships with the people that are on the dock all the time, the transient boats that are there, the fishermen... she's coming back for – we're doing a community potluck supper this Friday with this new fisheries group – and she's coming back from Virginia to talk about how important fishing is to the community.

Yeah, she's going to fly up for the day, which I thought was pretty extravagant, but she's very excited.

[XX]: That's great.

[SD]: So they both feel and understand the nature and the beauty of this and would love to be able to maintain it for as long as they could. My nephews, however, have shown no interest in this, all across the board. One nephew is on a boat.

[XX]: And this is your brother has a boat?

[SD]: Yes, his son is actually the only one that is fishing. My nieces have really not been involved. But my daughters; definitely. They love what we've done, they love the history of it, everything about it. So they have voices and I know that they understand... I think the one thing that I've given them is, teach them how to run a boat.

[32:31]

[SD]: I mean the proudest moment of my day was to watch my daughter, Shannon, who clammed her way through college, paid for college through clamming, to see her get in her own boat and head out into the harbor by herself to go to Monomoy and to clam. That was my proudest moment. And it thrilled me, because I was told nobody would take you serious on the water and women weren't allowed on the water, and we're bad luck. I mean when I fished, even owned the company, my crew's would give me a hard time because I was a woman on the boat and I didn't belong there. So to see them taking that step, it's very... I'm very proud of that, but I'm proud of them. To see them, to advocate for people and help people and be compassionate and understand the bigger picture of community, it's a proud moment for me.

[XX]: I can see that, you should be proud. So when, just returning for a second to when you had your, when you would run the boat out and have crews... how did you find the crew? People just needed jobs badly enough they were willing to work for you?

[SD]: We have a seasonal fishery so it always was an extra jolt and it was around a time when people were transitioning from one fishery to another. Like it might be, winter fishing is over, summer fishing hasn't started, or people would go lobstering... we'd find people. We had crews. And it was viable. I had my brothers working for me, and that was a nightmare. My brother David was on the boat with Ernie from the time he was 18 years old, and when I stepped on to fish, we couldn't be on the same boat. And I would do the same work. I mean physically I couldn't do the same work because of the nature of the fishery it was. But I was always good in the bow of the boat and I was fast with ropes and once somebody made a comment because my brother was bowman. So if I was in the bow of the other boat, in the style of fishing that we do you need to grab ropes very quickly and move them. Somebody made a comment that, "Oh, she's going to take your place." And he didn't like that too much. And then my other brother, my younger brother crewed on the boats with me and I was told by one of the fellow crew guys who was really nice, we were having drinks one night, and he said, "You know your brother would do everything to undermine you." He did everything he could to undermine you. And he would. It was just... I've always been in the middle of my two brothers and it's just the way they are, but, short of kidding, hard of course; wouldn't speak, grunted, men don't talk, women do.

[35:34]

[SD]: And I was always saying, "Would you use your words so I know what's going on! For crying out loud! I can't anticipate what you're doing." That was always... but my

funnest, funnest, funnest day was coming home. We were out in Kill Pond Bar which is up in Dennis and had a load of mackerel and this is my first time I ever took the trap boat home by myself and it was full and he goes, "Shareen, take the boat home." Because he had faith in me. And I said, "Ok." It's railed out with mackerel, I mean right to the rails. These are open 32-foot boats and they are big fishing boats but they are just topped off with mackerel. "Just follow John in." My brother in law. And John promptly went [making fast sound] and took off. I was like "Ah, shit, I have to get this boat up so its planing and every time I'd get the boat up to plain it felt like it was sinking and I finally get it up to plain and I thought, "It's a clear day, it's a straight shot, no big deal. As long as I stay away from...I got there. I get up to the dock, turn the boat around to dock it, and I look up and there are three old weir fishermen on the dock. Just snapping and clicking and shaking their heads. I'm like, "Damn, I have to dock the boat in front of them!" So I'm backing up, getting it, perfect 3 point landing right to the dock. And they just looked down at me and they said, "Cobby Nickerson would be rolling over in his grave right now if he saw you bringing this fish boat in!" My grandfather was a weir fisherman. Women didn't belong on the water. And you know what? Not one of them threw me a line. They would not throw me a line. So I had to go jump on the stern, grab a line, jump on the bow, it was the funniest thing. It's the funniest story I could tell about my experiences down there.

[XX]: Did their minds ever change?

[SD]: They're old. I don't know. I don't know. I mean, they are very respectful men and they are very nice men, but I just don't think that their wives ever ended up down at the dock to do any work so, yeah.

[XX]: That is really fascinating.

[SD]: It is. And that was, that must have been the middle '90's. So still, you'd think times would have changed by then. And I was so nervous about how... I just didn't want to hit the dock wrong because I knew that would be the story. So I had to do it as perfectly as I could. But now, my Shannon and Morgan go down to the dock and nobody questions anything about their role. What they do. And that's part of it.

[38:27]

[SD]: Just changing. Changing people's ideas about what should and should not be.

[XX]: Their whole expectations change.

[SD]: I think there are a lot of people that are totally fine with it, it's just that my experiences were a little different.

[XX]: Well there were all those superstitions and traditions and things that were overturned.

[SD]: Oh yeah. And women were bad luck on the boat. Oh yeah. So that's pretty much how I had to deal with things. But as far as working hand in hand with Ernie, that was never, the issue was more about my strength that actually my ability to be able to do it as a gender issue, physically. He's been very fair with his daughters. He and Shannon put the weirs in together this summer and fished them together, just the two of them. And he realized the scope of how hard it is to erect those things and how much strength it takes.

[XX]: I was going to say physically it must take a lot.

[SD]: Physically it's very hard. It's very hard, but she had a whole different respect for that. And understand by nature that we're just not as strong. But her capabilities, her ability. Her capability to do the job was there, and she does it to the best of her ability.

[XX]: That's fascinating. Let me see if there are other things that I wanted to ask you. I can just go on and on. So, what advice would you give people who were – well there are not too many people going into the industry but – do you have sort of words of wisdom?

[SD]: I think if there's sort of an opportunity and you're interested, take it. I say that as an artist, as well as somebody who's worked on the water. For so many different reasons, I think you become more in tune with your environment on so many levels. The importance of... I just think the importance and beauty of nature. To see light in so many different ways. To experience a day in so many different ways, the elements, to be able to go out in a boat and come home at the end of the day, and know you have done something that is tangible. That you could actually feed yourself. That you have been inspired by something. That you... I think it also, gives you more respect about the environment and what we've been doing to it. Just take the opportunity. Because it's....

[41:30]

[XX]: So, your system, the weir fishing is obviously a low impact fishery. But it sounds like you feel very strongly that there should not be this sort of uppity-ness among certain groups?

[SD]: I guess, in a perfect world, that would exist. But we are not in a perfect world. We're small boat fishermen. Day boat fishermen. That is a category I see that speaks in terms that are different than... we've got this fish caught this way, this fish caught that way. I've not seen that that has made a lot of difference to me. I know at the end of the day it does. To be fishing the weirs; I feel good about what I do and I know Ernie does too. And I know that that style of fishing is only ours because of our generational connection to it. But had we been, by choice, still in a fishing industry and had to make choices because we wanted to maintain a way of life, then I think that we... I don't know, maybe he wouldn't be doing something else, or I would do something else. But I think that when you look at a community, that's systematically putting people out of business... that were in that elitist group, then something is wrong with that system. The weirs aren't really surviving any more. Jig boat guys are gone. And those are some of the most historically, with that organization, held up in the highest esteem. They're gone. They're out of business. They weren't safe. The people that are being saved are the people that are economically invested in the system that helps moved them along. That has nothing to do with community. That has nothing to do with any of us. It only has to do with a handful of people making a lot of money; and that's it. And that's not what a community is. And it's been divisive and it's been cut-throat, gear wars, you name it, all the stuff that's bullshit. And we are just a community of people that should be working together. And I hope that today, in the next couple things I'm going to do over the weekend, that I'll be able to speak to that a little more. It's just... I think we have to look at it as, here; we're just a small fishing village. Let's all work together, and help each other out. I left the board of Directors for the Hook because we could not come to consensus about becoming a community-based organization. We strategically planned and the organization is Director driven it's not Board driven, and staff driven, so I think its outside influences of money that comes into the community. Some of the ideas are fantastic and some of them are bullshit. And so, that's where I am.

[XX]: Well, that's interesting, but you see that starting to change, maybe?

[SD]: It's always been there. They just, people just work for a living and people are not represented in the community. The majority of the fishing community is not represented in that community.

[XX]: With this new organization that you're involved with...

[SD]: It's a women's group, its women of fishing families, they, I think they'll have grant money very readily available soon. They are fishermen's wives mostly who are ticked off at what's going on in town and have had enough of it and just want to start getting a better voice. My role is to convince them that it's still not about gear in that negative way. It's not us or them, it's the community at whole.

[XX]: What do you anticipate the group doing?

[SD]: I don't know, they're infants, they're young. What I anticipate doing with them is doing what other women have done with me in the fishing... the Eileen Ours and the Cassy Abrews. To lend a voice, consult, advice, you know, be there to say, "Hey, I've already gone through this, this might be a better way to do it." Or to just lend whatever. We'll see. We'll see what happens. I think there's a groundswell of community people. We'll see. I have hop that they'll be able to take something that's been lost in our community and bring it back to what it should be. That would be nice.

[XX]: Well, Shareen, this has really been fascinating. I know that I will be probably asking you... [Abrupt end to recording].

[46:50]

[END OF INTERVIEW]

[46:50]

[End of Audio]