

Name of person Interviewed: Paul Nosworthy [PN]

Facts about this person:

Age (if known)

Sex Male

Occupation shoreside business owner (retired)

If a fisherman (if retired, list the ports used when fishing),

Home port

and Hail Port (port fished from, which can be the same)

Residence (Town where lives) Fairhaven, MA

Ethnic background (if known)

Interviewer: Marilyn Belmore [MB]

Sound tech: Mike Petillo

Transcriber: Laura Orleans

Place interview took place: HDC Building, New Bedford, MA

Date and time of interview: Saturday, Sept. 26, 2009

Keywords: diesel mechanics, refrigeration, New Bedford, swordfishing, off-shore clamming, mackerel, climate change, pollution, regulations, waterfront development

Index:

000-3:00 Background; worked in boatyards doing boat repairs; sailed on tall ships (WESTWARD, PRIDE OF BALTIMORE, CLEARWATER); experience with diesel mechanics led to career in refrigeration w/ New Bedford fleet.

3:00-6:00 Some experience offshore fishing (swordfishing, offshore clamming, mackerel fishing). 2009 marks 30 years in business as New England Marine Engineering; tells several stories about experiences at sea (finding a submarine, unusual catches, close calls)

6:00-9:00 Close call stories continued. Stormy weather experiences; gives advice to someone starting out in the industry today (as a fisherman)

9:00-12:00 workplace pranks; learning the trade

12:00-15:00 involvement in boat buyback; regulations; contrasts work of scalloping with work of groundfishing

15:00-18:00 challenges to industry; pollution: outfall pipe in Boston Harbor

18:00-21:00 describes work of his company (NE Marine Engineering) which does industrial refrigeration and electrical repairs. Importance of proper icing on swordfish boats

21:00-24:00 Discusses refrigeration on clam and herring boats; Climate change: warming of sea water and effect on refrigeration and sea life

24:00-27:00 Starting business which opened in 1979; importance of fishing industry to local economy

27:00-30:00 Cont. talking about importance of industry and port of NB to region

30:00-33:00 Challenges of waterfront development; regulations

33:00-36:00 Future of industry; importance of having fishermen involved in developing regulations; best parts of job

36:00-39:00 stressfulness of industry work at sea and on shore; Life on the Line (swordfishing TV show); dealing with loss

39:00-42:00 Tugboat as company symbol b/c sees his company as support for industry.

42:00-45:00 respect and humility

45:00-48:00 interconnectedness of industry; importance of Working Waterfront Festival

Interview with Paul Nosworthy conducted by Marilyn Belmore  
September 27, 2009, Working Waterfront Festival, New Bedford  
Transcribed by Laura Orleans

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Tech Whenever you guys wanna start...

MB What is your name?

PN My name is Paul Noseworthy

MB When and where were you born?

PN I was born in the year of our Lord 1954 in New Jersey actually.

MB Tell me a little bit about your neighborhood where you grew up.

PN I grew up, well my folks lived in Connecticut and stuff but then I grew up, I went to like grade school to high school on the Cape in Sandwich so I'm pretty much from the Cape area.

MB Who were your role models as a child?

PN Role models? Um it's hard to, hard to say. I mean I read a lot of Horatio Hornblower books and stuff, I really I was always interested in the boats and the ocean and stuff like that.

MB Tell me about your ethnicity, your background.

PN I'm an average white guy. I worked in the Caribbean for a few years and they always called me "white cheese" but I never got thrown off any of the islands because I was always teaching the natives how to fix stuff so I had a good engineering background from when I first started my company.

MB Do you have family who worked in the fishing industry?

PN No, no.

MB How and when did you get involved in the fishing industry and when did you move to Gloucester?

PN Well I...

MB I mean when did you move to New Bedford?

PN To yeah, that's alright. I uh, well when I got outta of school I worked in a boatyard and then I went to work in New York City for a couple of years for a power company and I worked for an electrical I couldn't stand New York so I got on the Hudson River to see the Clearwater and that

was with Pete Seeger and we sailed up and down the Hudson River and I did a lot of boat repair and then I sailed tall ships for about four years and I worked on the Westward and the original Pride of Baltimore and that boat got lost at sea with all ha...well with the one the captain he was from Dartmouth. And I worked on a lot of other boats but to me sailing was kind of boring, I liked to fix boats. So I ended, I was living in Maine and I kept coming down here from Maine and I couldn't make a living in Maine but there was always plenty of work down around here. So I'd go down to Mystic and work on boats and I'd end up here in New Bedford there was a lot of...I was a diesel mechanic then and there was plenty of diesel mechanics around, but nobody could work on the generator end so I started working on the generators cause the Caterpillar guys did the engine side so I built up a nice little electrical business and then when the swordfishing fleet started getting really big in the early 80s I started doing all the ice machines and the bait freezers cause the bait was still slackin' out and the ice wasn't any good so we started putting salt water ice machines on the boats and the salt water ice was colder and the fish quality came out a lot better so then I was doing a lot of refrigeration, blast freezers and you know ice machines and then I started working in the ice plants and stuff like that.

MB What types of fishing have you done?

3:00

PN I've been, I was off George's swordfishing and I've been off shore all along the Atlantic Coast on some clam boats, some herring boats, some mackerel boats. I owned a small dragger for a short time, but that didn't pan out.

MB What positions have you held?

PN Oh I've been the owner of this New England Marine Engineering, this is our 30th year of being in business. And I was on positions on boats, I was the mate, I was engineer, mate, boatswain, different jobs.

MB Can you just describe a typical trip? A typical day

PN In what kind of, what kind of boat?

MB A favorite boat that you worked on. What a typical day would have been like.

PN Well probably one of the last time I went fishing was kind of boring cause there was no cl..., we were surf clamming, this was last summer and the boats were only, they were only dredging and only catching about, oh we weren't even doing a cage an hour. It was terrible. It was not, we were down on the Jersey coast and there was just no clams at all. But before that I was mackerel fishing it was a tough year and it seemed we'd set the net and we'd catch what they call water set, we were pair trawling and there wasn't much fish around so all the boats went in a big line, there was about ten of us, it was like victory at sea. You know the boats lined up just looking at the bottom for fish. And then you look at these fish finders and you could see actually the bottom, it was like a map. It was like as it grew, as the thing sounded the bottom you could see the form of the bottom of the ocean. Then all of a sudden you saw this round thing and it started getting

bigger and bigger. There was a square top and pipes and you could tell it was a submarine just sitting in the mud. It was like "wow".

MB Have you ever pulled up anything unusual in the net?

PN Um, I no I know some of the guys have picked up some weird stuff. One of the guys, he just passed away last year, they were off the Cape and they picked up a jet with a guy still sitting in it. And they called the state police and said, "What should we do?" and the state police didn't know what to do, they said, "Well pull the head off and bring it in." They said "Yeah sure." They just cast it off and let it go back down. And then I heard oh three, four months ago, guys told me last summer they picked up a casket with a guy still in it, a coffin. But uh. And I've seen a lot of bombs, a lot of bottles, different antique bottles, a lot of different uh, you get a lot of bullet shells and stuff.

MB What kind of close calls have you had at sea?

PN Oh a few times boats almost running you down but just the closest call I ever had at sea, I was actually bringing a schooner to St. Lawrence seaway and I went down and had a cup of tea and I came up and one of the deck hands was there and when you're steering in an inland waterway you have two white lights and you have to line the two white lights up and then steer and that's called a range

6:00

and big ships also have a forward and aft light and those line up and if you see a red and a green on both sides of those that means you're steering on his bow so somebody come to me and says Paul this is kind of weird, that range doesn't, there's two lights. So I looked and there was a four hundred foot ore carrier steaming right down on us. So I threw her hard over and missed. But that was probably as close as I ever came to...I looked and I says, that's not the range, your range is over to the right and the range your steering on is, he was steering right on an ore carrier.

MB What kinds of experiences have you had in stormy weather?

PN The last story, the stormiest weather I had was about five years ago I brought a boat back from Iceland. It was an off-shore clam boat, we were bringing it back and I had worked on it here in New Bedford it was called the STEVEN S and it was owned by a guy out of New Jersey named Gunnars Finland and it had worked it's way up to Nova Scotia then it had gone up to Iceland and then there was two boats fishing and one of them sank so none of the Icelanders would go fishing on clam boats anymore, they thought they were dangerous so it was bought by an owner here and they asked me to go up and bring the boat back. And it was blowing hurricane force winds the whole time and we were doing about nine knots and we bouncing wave top to wave top and you'd literally smash into the upper bunk into your bunk you'd have to crawl into a ball and put your feet against the wall and your back just to try to get some sleep, but most of the time...one guy got thrown out of his rack, broke his leg. I mean, we drove the through hull to the bottom of the boat. I was taking poly balls and two by fours to keep the boat from sinking. So that was, it was kind of a thrill.

MB How has the industry changed over the years?

PN Um, there's a lot more boats now, a lot bigger boats, a lot more electronics so they're more efficient fishing machines. You know they really have changed in that respect. But the work is still hard.

MB What advice would you give to somebody who was starting out today?

PN Um, well you keep hearing gloom and doom but they keep fishing and things, it's hard. Somebody starting today, just work hard, pay attention, really pay attention, stay sober, you know. And try to get on good boats, try to get on boats and if a boat is stuck for an engine repair, a major engine repair or something like that don't ever hang around for a boat because that usually takes a long time and you could probably do a lot of guys do go transit until you find a crew that you can fish with well. Look for a gang that you can fish with, that you can get along with well that's probably the most important thing. And working for a company that settles the checks well. If a young guy was getting started I would recommend that yeah.

MB Do you have children

PN Yes

MB In the industry?

PN No.

MB What makes a good fisherman?

PN Oh, the ability to follow orders. The ability to work long hours without complaint. Uh, the ability to have good humor. A lot of guys get strange off shore, I've seen that a lot of times.

9:00

MB What do you mean?

PN After a few days not seeing the ocean they miss their families they miss being home, they just get bummed out. They get, one guy gets brought down and it brings other people down. So the thing is try to pull tricks on each other sometimes, funny things, you know what I mean. Don't hurt anybody, but we always try to do little things to make people have a laugh, you know what I mean. I'm the brunt of my own jokes a lot of times, but that's part of being a good dory mate, you know what I mean?

MB Who are people that you have worked with that you respect?

PN Well one of my best friends is Reidar Bendiksen. He and I have been friends for 30 years or better. Roy Enoksen, I respect him a lot. He's done a lot with Eastern Fisheries and Dockside Repairs. I have a lot of respect for Roy. Those are probably two of my, people that I respect. I mean there's a lot of other guys that have made money but you kinda, those two guys I really,

you know I have a lot of respect for and I'm pretty friendly with. Oh and Barney Truex, the SeaWatch people. I do a lot of work for them for the ocean shore quahogs and they're pretty, they've treated me very well. I have a lot of respect for them.

MB How did you learn the skills you need to be a fisherman?

PN Doin' it. There really, everybody says I wanna go to school. And you know my forte now is more in the repair and maintenance, but you know troubleshooting problems. I just, I don't know I was like a natural, I mean I've taken a lot of courses and I've taken a lot of training and I read a lot of manuals, I re-read a lot of stuff and I refresh myself whenever possible because as much as you think you know technically, like I said the boats have gotten a lot more technical. When I first started they were all a bunch of wooden boats. I remember going down and seeing one guy, one of the guys from Bob Mitchell's shop was down there, and he had just started working for the company, Bob Mitchell's company, R.A. Mitchell, and they were down there and there was a boat and it had a jack shaft and it had a bunch of pumps belt driving off this one long jack shaft and when the engine would turn the jack shaft would turn. It was like off one of the generators and the jack shaft would turn. Well the boat came in and it was like a leaky sieve and so we were joking and the guy says, "Well the boat wasn't keeping up with the last storm when the boat was working." So he says what they did what any good boat owner would do in those days when there was no money around and in the early 80s there was no money around, it was really hard times for us, really hard times. If they think it's hard now, it was really hard then. And so what they would do is they just put a fifth pump on. There was four pumps running couldn't keep up with the water. Instead of hauling the boat and fixing the leaks, they'd put two more pumps on the boat. And I remember seeing that a lot. You wouldn't see that today, but that, you used to see stuff like that.

MB In your opinion what years were the best for the fishing industry?

PN This last ten probably. This last five or ten years I think has been the best I've seen money wise. The fleet, they had the buy back program.

12:00

I was actually, I talked to John Reardon, I talked to Ray Starvis on that buyback program. Everybody said it would never fly and I put the seed out, I remember sitting in a cold winter's day talking to those guys with the engine running in the ship yard telling them my idea about the government doing a buy back program and five year's later, I never got any credit for it, I'm not looking for any credit, but I remember I was the one that kept telling everybody, if they will do a buy back... and then suddenly it came to pass so...I always felt in my heart that I had a lot to do with that buy back program.

MB What kind of effects do you think the present regulations have on the industry and how is this affecting families and the community?

PN I think the regulatory process, I think what I've seen and you know again I, a lot of this talk on the waterfront, but you get a pretty good feel of it and I think that the highliners are out there making money fishing and then the, there's regulatories for a lot of different things now, alright

you've got the off-shore clam business, you've got the off-shore swordfish industry, you've got the draggers, you know your groundfish boats. You got a lot of different fisheries and the regulations are different on all of em. The scallop industry I think has really, really been, that's been regulated very, very well. They closed some areas, they got a species that doesn't move around much. Not like swordfish, not like groundfish. Groundfish spawns. When they put the Hague Line in, that doomed us from the start right there. Cause all the fish were spawning on the Canadian side and whoever made it to our side we got to keep. At that time the way they came up with their basis it seemed that to get some guys to out there and to do some test tows, they hired boats and crews that weren't the highline fishermen instead of sending an observer on the highline boat, they put some, they just got a boat and a crew together, they go out there fish a net that wasn't fishing well and there's an art to, there's a lot more of an art to running a dragger than there is to running a scalloper, I mean scallop is hard work you just rake through the scallops and you shuck 'em. Where the dragger boats you have to have the doors set right, the ground cables have to drag right, the net has to drag just right through the water and you have to drag certain bags at certain tides at a certain speed because the fish are feeding certain areas, they move around. You know the cows are at that end of the field and your fishing on the other end of the field, you're not gonna catch anything. And if these guys don't know where to fish and when to fish, your best fishermen have a book in their back pocket when they go aboard, it has all their hands, has all their tows, now it's on a computer chip, but back in the old days everybody had a notebook and you look at January, the last four January's we did good over here or we did good over here, you know. It, the regulatory, they, there's so much buy catch now there's I see like there's so much cod fish and there not allowed to catch it because there's only fish mixed in it or this and that. They take the, they're only allowed to land so many pounds of haddock or so many pounds of cod fish

15:00

then they gotta, what is above their limit they have to throw back. Well it's dead. So what are you doing? You're just, you're, you're basically just using up, you know open a box of cheerios eat one bowlful and throw the rest in the garbage is what you're basically doing. And then you wonder why you're running out of cheerios. That's a scenario you can understand. Regulations some of it they're doing a good job. Scallops are doing good, doing well I should say. Some of the other fisheries, I think its piss poor. And I think the pollution, they put the outfall pipe in Boston, it's another little story I mean you wanna hear my beefs, this is one of my bigger beefs right there. If you know where Cape Cod is and you know from Cape Cod from the tip of Ptown going up to Boston there's a bank called Stellwagon Bank. And on Stellwagon Bank is where all the whales live. When I was on the WESTWARD a sailing ship we were doing whale research down in Navidon Bank of the Dominican Republic and it's like a plateau, it's about 150 feet deep. But it's a plateau in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean and all the fish we catch there and the whales would feed there and they'd spawn there and they'd have a good time. Well then in the summer months the state, like anybody goes to Cape Cod or Florida you know, they commute up to Stellwagon Bank which was teeming with herring, teeming with tons and tons of herring, ok. And now they put that outfall pipe out and they told all the lobstermen, once this outfall pipe comes out of Boston...What they did they, the first boats when in there and they drilled holes in the bottom of the ocean and then they drilled a pipe down and then what they did was they filled it with blue water and put a cap on it. And then the big boring machine came out of Boston just boring and they'd watch in the tunnel where the water was coming, the blue water. And if it was



coming in on the right side they'd move the drill to the right and they went seven miles out into the ocean, ok. And then they just after that they popped all the little covers and then the effluent goes out. Well the thing is, there's tons of nitrogen and everything else and that goes out into that seven mile pipe and it goes out into Stellwagon Bank Area, alright. And if you remember, the coastline is, if you're looking from south to north, if look to your west you're gonna see Marshfield, Pembroke, Quincy, all those areas right? And if you look to the east, you're gonna see Stellwagon Bank and that comes quite shoal. And then in between Stellwagon Bank and the shore, there's a big cavity, maybe a hundred feet deep, eighty feet, you know if you look at a map you'll see it. So all this effluent comes down into that, into that big bucket underwater and it just keeps filling, a little bit, maybe not all of it, but a lot of it gets caught in there, gets caught in there and then when you get a good Northeaster, now you've got this concentrated evil in vast copious amounts that gets washed right out into Georges Banks the most fertile fishing grounds in the world and to me it's just a travesty.

18:00

And anybody whose ever said anything about it publicly is I don't know, more scientists were saying it and then they disappeared I don't know, they got bought off or who knows or they got smecollotious (sp?) But it's a frightening, that's, and then they say it's our fault. You know there's so much nitrogen and you hear these guys talking out here, the farms and the run off, Scott's Fertilizer. They say the toads are all dying off because of too much Roundup, you know what I mean. It's the chemical in Roundup that's killing toads. But everybody blames the fishermen overfishing, but they're not spawning because they're not able to come up into the harbors and they're not able to come up into the estuary anymore. It's, it's really, I'm sorry, it's a nerve.

MB Are you still fishing on a regular basis?

PN Mostly I'm so busy trying to keep the fleet running I don't really get out. Once in awhile, like I say, once or twice a year I'll go on a trip to troubleshoot a piece of machinery or sometimes just to get some piece of mind.

MB If you had the opportunity would you go back full time to fishing?

PN Yeah if I didn't have my company I would be fishing , yeah.

MB Ok let's talk about your company. What is your business and some of the projects you've worked on?

PN It's very, very top secret. No, no. The name of the company is New England Marine Engineering and Supply and what we do is industrial refrigeration and electrical repairs to the boats. Basically in a lot of the boats we fix about everything.

MB Are there any projects you wanna mention that you worked on you also mentioned that you have seen some of the boats you've worked on the TV show Swords.

PN Yeah, well we do MacLean's fleet there. Like I said years ago, the boats used to pump fresh water ice on the boats and they used to go to Grand Banks which is six days steam from here. There's Georges Banks and there's the Grand Banks up north and when they'd come back in the fish is all green and crappy so we started putting ice machines on the boats with flake ice ok, cause salt water ice is 28 degrees and it took less ice to freeze the fish, not to freeze it, but to preserve the fish and when you make salt water ice to put on a piece of swordfish, the fish on the outside, it's almost like when you make a tight muscle on your arm it would be like the fish is firm like and then when you get it to the dock and they'd pull it out of the fish hold and hit it with the hose a little bit, and you cut into it, it's nice pink swordfish meat. When they used to put it in fresh water ice, you'd pull the fish off the boat and it would be green on the outside and the meat would be all white and it was just bleeding out, it would be like bleeding out, you know cause it wouldn't firm up, you know? So we put salt water machines on the boats of course then sometimes they were tuna fishing, they didn't want the cold water ice so then what we did was to put water makers on to make some fresh water for tuna time. So it became a lot of, a conundrum of machines and the technology got more so you needed more technical guys, cause most of the guys fishing, they're good at baiting a hook, throwing it over the side, mending twine

21:00

and their time is spent picking fish if your on a codfish boat, they're picking and gutting fish. If your guy's on a scalloper than they catch the scallops and they just wanna whittle scallops, pretty much that's all they do is they pick the pile, whittle scallops, it's a back breaking job. I'm lucky I have a little bit more engineering that I was able to work on that. We do have refrigeration on the clam boats too because now the water's, that's another thing, that's crazy, this year, of all years, I never, this is how I get going here, but of all, in the past, all these refrigeration plans, on the clam boat alright, I'm jumping around and I apologize for that, but on the clam boat, before, well let's start with the herring boats. The herring and the mackerel boats, they just have big tanks, and what they do was you filled the tanks with water and you run your refrigeration which is a couple hundred horsepower and you bring down these hundreds of thousands of gallons of water until you get it down about 25 degrees and then when you catch fish you dump it in this chilled water and it gets it nice and cold and then you continue to bring that heat out of the fish and you're talking thousands of metric tons of fish so anyway, that was typical RSW. Well when the clam boats came in, and that's the same way the tuna boats did everything. When the clam boats came in, they bring in clams in cages and there's thirty bushels to a cage and some of the boats have 60 cages, now the boats have a hundred cages, some have a hundred fifty cages and what happens is after 20 hours, the clams start to expire, in other words they get warm and they wilt. And when the meat comes in it's grey. So what we do, we spray fresh water, but the difference with the herring, there's scales and there's just the fish water. But on the clam boats there from the bottom and there's a lot of sand in the clam and you can't re-use that same water because there's just too much dirt in it. So what happens is we have to suck the water in one time from the ocean to this big refrigeration units and then we just spray that water. It looks like a mist, but it's actually about a hundred and something gallons an hour, or a hundred gallons a minute on those clams. So it takes big refrigeration units to bring what used to be 70, the hottest water the lobster boats and stuff, the hottest water used to be about 70 degrees in the summer and then you need to bring it down to forty degrees. Now this summer everybody's having problems. The water temperature's 80 degrees. So now we're trying to bring water down the delta t on it is 80 degrees

to 40. So you're talking about a 40 degrees delta t, temperature difference, td, ok. That's a whopping difference of temperature. I mean the temperature of the oceans is, all the guys are coming and telling me that the temperature is coming up. We're seeing fish in the Gulf Stream now that we never saw up here before, tropical fish coming up the Gulf Stream that never made it this far north before. Big change are afloat out in the ocean, big changes.

24:00

MB Now what led you to open this business to begin with and what year was that?

PN Oh, basically what led me to start this business? Like I said I sailed tall ships for a few years, four years I remember in 1979 I get off the Pride of Baltimore and I was in Tortolla, the British Virgin Islands and then I was fixing boats, they used to call me "White Cheese" cause I could fix all the stuff and I taught the local island guys how to do basic refrigeration and diesel mechanics. I was a pretty handy guy, you know? I'm always the legend of all my stories anyway. But anyways so I got sick of not seeing the snow so I came back home to Maine and I was living in Maine and it was hard to make a living, you know I had the company hit or miss. And then I came down to New Bedford and I started, well I met a girl and then we got married and had kids and then she's got the house and I still have kids, but I started my business basically, the thing of it there was, you know I came here and I was working with the fishermen and there was just like so much [work], I never went back home.

MB What year was this?

PN I came down, fact I started in '79 and I came back to New Bedford here in about '81. But I had worked at Mattapoisett Boat Yard way back in '73, '74, '75. So I knew the area. And then when I got involved in this commercial fishing industry it was just Katie bar the door. Just I'm busy. I got eight guys working for me. I could hire more guys right now. I mean it really, really busy. We're doing really well, knock on wood, thank the Lord, you know? I mean I'm thankful for what I have. I'm thankful for the work. But the technology's increased enough you need technicians now. You can't, hiring good engineers is just very, very difficult.

Tech: Can I interrupt you for a sec. Tech talk

MB How is fishing viewed in New Bedford?

PN How is fishing viewed in New Bedford? Well without fishing...by whom? I'm sorry to say that

MB [can't hear here]

PN I believe that it's well received. I think that the fish processing plants employ an awful lot of the people. I think that if they don't, if the people, the community of New Bedford and Fairhaven and Dartmouth and Mattapoisett and Rochester and Acushnet, the outlying areas, if they don't appreciate that without the fishing industry I believe it's the last industry left in New Bedford. I mean I don't know of any weaving mills here anymore or any clothing mills. I mean there's a couple small shops yeah. Goodyear's gone. Revere Copper and Brass closed down.

I've had those people calling me looking for work all their engineers are asking me for jobs, I'm like jeeze! I mean I got here today, people were pounding for work. You know.

27:00

I mean these were guys that were the maintenance divisions of these plants are coming to me looking for work. You know I look at Northern Electric, that motor winding shop, I mean they used to have 8,9 guys winding motors all--now there's two guys winding motors. I mean there's just, without the fishing industry in New Bedford, maybe it would turn into a tourist area, but...

MB What are the strengths of the port?

PN It's a shallow, the strengths of the port, uh the biggest one, one of the things that brought me here because I had come in here on boat repairs, the repair facilities. There's a lot of hydraulics shops, there's a lot of weld shops, there's, you talk to guys from any other port and I've been to other ports and the ability to repair something, repair it correctly and repair it quickly, we have over almost all of the ports. The other thing is it is a sheltered harbor. The other thing is our fish processing plants. We can process through this city, more fish than any other port in the Eastern Seaboard and probably in the country. We can process, there, so I took a friend one time down to the docks, or not to the docks, but down by the fish houses and I says "Oh yeah I put coolant tower," you know I was boasting about my achievements blah, blah, blah and they said, "Oh I though this was just like empty buildings" cause there's no windows on it, there's just tin buildings, they look like, people just think they're like storage warehouses, but when you open the doors of some of these plants and you see 60, 70, 80 or 100 people in a line cutting and processing fish or sorting scallops or mixing scallops or you know processing scallops or processing fish. There's a lot of people, there's people that come in here from Brockton, a ton of people come from Providence. There's people who come from all over to work here every single day. You don't realize it, but when the fish houses are working, the streets get very, very quiet.

MB Who live around port and are they sympathetic to the needs of the industry?

PN Who lives around the port and are they sympathetic to the needs of the industry? It's funny a lot of the workers that work in the fish plants, they're minorities; I mean they may live in the city. A lot of them come from Providence. I, you know it's again maybe I look at it with tunnel vision because I, when I get a call two blocks off the docks, I really don't know my way around town so much. I really don't. I've lived in the town for years, for 30 years and I don't even know my way around certain areas because I know every dock and I know every fish house so I really don't get involved with the community. I'm down here working. One thing when you work in this industry, it consumes you. You spend a lot of hours working. I bought a motorcycle back in June thinking I was gonna have some fun this summer. Well I just got my permanent license today, in this rain storm I went for my road test.

30:00

I didn't have, I registered the bike two weeks ago. I did not have time to register, I was just working, you know. And the guys want the weekend off, I'm like you gotta be crazy it's Friday the boats are coming in. This is when we gotta do the repairs. And when you get one boat out,

you get two in. When you get two out you get four in. It doesn't seem to, it's a cascading effect. There's a lot, a lot, well for us, there's a lot of work. There's a lot of work.

MB Do you live in New Bedford?

PN I live in Fairhaven.

MB What challenges is the fishing community in New Bedford facing right now--pollution, the economy, regulations, development?

PN Lately I see the development on the waterfront. When I first came to this harbor there was very, very few yachts. There was a lot of old wooden boats, leaky, old wooden boats that used to get their bilges pumped. Typically in the old days guys would pull the oil from the engine and they'd let it drain the bilge and then they'd just pump it out. Yachts wouldn't come into this harbor because they would get the side of their boats dirty and the water was dirty. It's been cleaned up a lot. There's no more oil spills like you used to see. Now suddenly there's marinas been built all around the town. I think they're encroaching. They built, what was a fish plant over here is now getting built as a hotel. I started to see urbanism. "Waterfront, you know waterfront, "let's develop it!" But the thing is that we still have all the fish processing plants and a lot of fish is brought here from other parts of the world to be processed here. We can process the product here. We have the machinery, the technology to process the product here. So and again, I don't mean to side step your question, we have that here and I'm hoping that'll hold us to what we have. Regulations I think that's hurting people quite a bit. I think some regulations are good. Some of my fishing buddies would disagree with me. I know they were hitting hard the mackerel. I saw them hitting the mackerel. They were taking a freighter out of here a month in the mackerel they brought it in just a couple...I mean they were bringing in, six boats were bringing in boatloads and boatloads and boatloads. And there one of my good customers you know. I thought that was a little bit over doing it. I think everybody needs to watch what they're doing. I think we, the fishing community, boat owners, the processors, the boat people need to watch. But I think on the other hand the regulatory people take it to an extreme sometimes. So it's really finding a happy medium. I think the people regulating it don't know what they're doing. I think sometimes the people catching the stuff get a little greedy. The combination of the two are hurtful.

MB What do you see in the future for New Bedford?

PN As long as they don't catch all the fish or regulate it improperly

33:00

to destroy the, how could I say, the species or the stocks, as long as the stocks are maintained and managed well, and I think they should be managed partially by people from the industry who have a handle on what's going on. I think getting people, politicians and lawyers that are making six figure salaries that don't even know what they're talking about. I mean every time you see them put money towards a project, it seems to get used up on the lawyers and the accountants and it never really went to what it was supposed to. I seen it too many times. I think we've all seen that. I think that the fishermen themselves need to have a strong say into what the regulatory

process is. But also, cause every fish, when the guys go clammin' in an area, if they clear out of that area the lobster guys can go in there and they can clean up, because all the broken clams that got left in the bottom of the ocean that now makes a food stock for the lobsters. So everybody, the ocean's a very diverse environment--not like us. We bring corn and vegetables in from the Midwest so we eat it and then we're done. But the lobster or the swordfish or the whale, they're all eating what is there that God put there. They kind of, it's an ecosystem that has a very, very tight balance. Since we started bringing all the herring in, you see the seals in this harbor are phenomenal in the winter. I mean you see, you count twenty, thirty right by the dock. You never used to see that. But when the herring boats came in, they chased the herring boats in and now they're in Buzzard's Bay and now they've devastated the lobster stocks in Buzzard's Bay. You can't have too much of one and now you're getting shark attacks around the Vineyard and around Cape Cod because there's so many sea lions. We never used to have that many. Maybe a long time ago we did, I wasn't here a hundred years ago, I couldn't tell you, but I see changes in the last two or three years, crazy stuff. You gotta, I mean just sitting there, working on a unit on a roof, you see all these sea lions and you see the herring boats, but when the herring boats leave, the sea lions leave, but hey what do I know, I'm just a refrigeration guy, fixing a motor on a roof. You know what I mean? But I've been around awhile, you know.

MB What's the best part of your job and working in New Bedford?

PN On a nice morning when it's not raining and its not snowing and you climb up on a roof and you fixing something and you look out over the harbor, you look over the dyke and you see the Elizabethan Islands and it's just a beautiful sunny day and you just say, you know what, life can be good. That's one of the best parts to my job. Collecting money is not fun, managing people isn't fun, but that and fixing something that nobody else can fix, that's always a high. I always get a high out of being the guy to fix it.

36:00

MB What would you like festival visitors to understand about the commercial fishing industry and the working waterfront?

PN I'd like them to understand that there's a big ocean out there but its not that big, there's only fish in certain parts of it. And that they guys who go out there are risking their lives every day and the people that, you know its, the fishermen really needs to be respected. They got a bum rap because years ago they'd come in and get drunk and that was what a fisherman did. They were gone from their families and by the time they got home they guys want to unwind, they haven't had a beer in so many days. There was a lot of drunks, there was a lot of drugs. It was a problem, it still is. But basically everybody says "oh he's a fisherman, he's a drug addict" You know what I mean? I think fishermen, a lot of fishermen get a bum rap. I think a lot of guys are good hard workers and they work way too much and there's like way too much stress. It's a very stressful environment. You know those fish houses, there's hooting and hollerin' there's money on the line every day. It is really, it's as stressful in a fish house as it is...A funny scenario, if you see that boat Swords: Life on the Line, the one, that's our boat, those are boats I work out of, people I know, who I've known for years. And I look at those people and the captain's yelling at the crew and I said to my gang the other day, sometimes I go yellin' at the guys and the secretary says, "Don't talk down to those guys." And I was talkin' to the guys outside, I says "You guys see

that show?" and they're like "Yeah, yeah, yeah Paul." Cause we do get along. I mean the guys tell me they like me, you know. But it's funny, I says, I'm just like one of those captains. I've got six, seven guys in my shop that need to do a certain job and when they do it wrong, they can either get hurt or something's gonna get fouled up and the captain's yellin' at the guys because they're gonna lose a fish or they're gonna ruin some gear or lose some gear. And it's just a matter of being, you know, I sailed with a guy years ago, he used to go: "I don't wanna be captain, then you don't have fun anymore." And it's true. I mean I just have a little repair business, but I'm like the captain. My shop is like a little boat, because it's the same. At least the guys get to go home at night. The fishermen don't. I think it's neat that the people can come down and see, and there's a lot of history. There's a lot of history here in New Bedford, going back to the whaling days and things and things that shouldn't be forgot. All lot of guys that put their lives on the line. I've lost a lot of friends on the boats. You gotta remember, I work on every boat, not every single boat, but I work on most all these boats. When there's a boat lost, chances are I knew somebody or someone in their family or you know. It's pretty tough, it's pretty tough.

MB How many boats are out there?

PN We used to handle about six hundred boats, I don't know if it's that now.

MB Is there something you'd like to add that you haven't been asked?

PN No. I, I love my job. I love the work. I love the people I work with.

39:00

I've made a lot of friends. There's a lot of really, really good people working down here. A lot of real hard workers, lot of good crafts people and a lot of good...You get people, you get boats from all over the northeast they come here to New Bedford to get repairs done. It's a good industry. I'm proud to have been a part, proud to have had these years, 30 years this year. I'm proud to be part of it. I got no regrets.

Tech: I've really found this interview fascinating just because, well of all the people we've talked with so far I think you're one of the few to come at it from an engineering perspective. Sort of like a normal everyday problem, like you're almost the support system for these boats. I mean your the guy that's trouble shooting the equipment and you're the one that's sort of concerned about whether this piece works and is this gonna do the job for them and everything. Early on you had mentioned I think different times where you either proposed and idea or you were integral, you and your company were integral in fixing a certain problem. I don't know that must be just a very unique perspective to kind of be on the front lines and the side lines at the same time like you're not necessarily out there every day fishing perse but you are what they come in, you're like the doctor at the hospital obviously. You're the person who wraps it in the Band-Aid and slap on the Neosporin and is like alright you're good to go again. It's just like you're, you, it is a really integral part that we haven't talked about yet. We really talked about fishermen and I don't know is there anything else that maybe you wanna talk about that sort of about, I don't know, any of those kind of feelings that maybe that you have about your role in this community.

PN Well if you look at the side of my trucks there's a, I always wanted to have a piece of rope with a square knot cause I went to sea for years, I mean I sailed across the Atlantic twice and the last twenty years I mean I've been to sea, I know what it is to be in the ocean, I've seen those sixty foot waves. I've been rolled out of my bunk and thrown. I've been tossed around the engine room, and tossed around the deck. One thing when I did start my company and if you looked I gave you my card there's a picture of a tugboat on it. And you look at all these other fishing companies and they all have picture of a fishing boat. And they all have a picture of a fish. And I have a tugboat. And people say what do you work on tugs? I says no. I always thought I liked the tugboat because the tugboat is the support. It's not the ship, it's not the freighter, it's not the fishing boat. But when the tug, when the fishing boat breaks down, who helps bring him back to port? Who is the support guy? The little engine. I think I could, I think I...My thing was the tugboat was a support industry. I am a support, I'm not the actor. I'm the guy behind the curtain pulling strings and making things work. I've never thought myself to be the hero. I'm the hero of all my stories, I'm a legend in my own mind at my own time, but you know in reality I've always felt that my company and the service that my guys do, and we've always tried to be humble and we've always tried to be respectful, tried.

42:00

We aren't always humble, we aren't always as respectful as we probably should be, but I've always tried to be. And it was funny, I went into a fish house the other day and the lady, the receptionist, it was one of those places you had to sign in, she says oh, she says, I like your guys. When they all come in they're so polite. And I told my guys that. I went back to the building, I climbed the ladder and I was hanging up the bag and I says you know guys, I've taught you a lot of things about how to fix this equipment, to troubleshoot it, keep things running and keep the guys from having break downs. But when the lady said that I says, maybe I've taught you to be humble. And I go to the supply houses for refrigeration and there's some of the most arrogant guys: "I work on supermarkets, I'm the reefer guy, I'm pretty hot stuff! I'm an air conditioning guy, I'm pretty..." And our guys are like well ok. But when we go back to them, we pull compressors apart that other guys would change, we tear them down and rebuild them on site. You know we rebuild things, we get what we can running at the cheapest, most cost effective way for the customer. And my guys were like, you know "I hope I taught you guys humility and a little bit of being humble and polite." They said, "Yeah, we did learn that from you Paul." I mean they actually told me that and that, when you said what are the best things of my job, well yeah, the nice view on top of a fish house on a nice day, that's nice, but you know the other thing is when your crew, cause I buy pizza once in awhile we have something to eat. I mean I'm around those guys cursing and swearing like an old captain from the wheelhouse, but the guys are like "Hey Paul, have a good weekend. Hey how ya doin." They're always happy to see me. They cheer me up you know. They, and that's one of the best things of my business, working with the guys that appreciate me, that you know, I'm getting all emotional here, sorry. But it's a real love of the industry. It's a real love. And the guys love it too. You know we here every story, when they come in this is broken you fix this, this is broke, this is broke. "Hey how's fishin' guys? How much more, how many more years of clams have we got out here?" "Well we were working this area, we did this. We were working this area, this isn't looking good..." When things are getting' bad I feel it. I know the boats aren't gonna be comin' in. You know it's, I feel it. I feel it. I see it. I mean I live it every, and again I have made my trips, you know. I have made my trips to see what it is. No I didn't make my living doing it, but I mean I was a share,



and I mean I have done trips makin' a share. But most of the times I've been in the ocean I'm there as a, sort of as an observer or as a tech. So I've seen what it is. Not like I say, I'm the best whittler or I'm the best net twine. Reidar they used to joke with me. I used to hang with the guys doin' nets, but since I can't really, couldn't really mend twine like the guys, they used to tell me, "be the nail" So you'd stick your finger up, they'd loop the net on your finger cause you'd get to different parts and one guy has to hold the net tight while, so it's a two man job. So I always told all the dragger guys, "I make a good nail." "Yeah that's alright Paul. You're alright"

45:00

So I mean I still feel very, very a part of this industry. Very, very, very much. Like I said, when the boats are in at the dock and the guys are home with their families, or they take their week or they're on rotation and they got their two weeks off, we're here seven days a week, down at these docks. Every day there's a boat at the dock and there's always a boat at the dock. So I mean I work more seven day weeks than any fisherman I know. They all complain about bein' tired, I says yeah and I work every weekend. I work every gosh darn day. I'm tired. I'm really tired. I've fallen and hurt myself more times on these boats than half these fish[ermen] I just keep bouncing up and going along, you know. Believe me. And I've had guys die right at the dock going to the tanks getting a cig... You know I'm forever buying safety harness making sure the guys are hooked up. Chasing the safety factor. It's a full time job, you know.

Tech: I think this festival is great because I think, I think most, I would probably say most if not everyone that's involved in this whether they're working it or just coming to it or a musician on stage or participant, everyone, egos don't even come into play. They're all here because they're all tapped into the overall culture of this area and this industry and it's not really about any one person. They're all intersecting with someone else and they're all talking about the lifestyle and the culture and they're not really talking about, they use they're own examples and stories to illustrate things. And I, you know what you just said I think obviously fits in with what this whole event is about. It's just like, it's like a microcosm of the overall industry. Everyone has there own stuff, but they're coming into it to not really talk about them, to actually talk to each other about problems or what they think is important.

PN It's the industry. When we first started New England Marine Engineering, the big joke is we are New England Marine Engineering. In other [words] we are, and we are a fishing industry. We are a community. We all without the boats I don't have a business. Without me, the boats don't have the boats fixed right to go fishing. We're all another chain in the cog of the industry. It's more complex than I can even tell you right now. That's just, I'm just talking about fixing boats. Then you get guys supplying the gear. Then you've got the guys that are buying the product and processing the product and selling the product. You go to these fish houses, there's a ton of sales people just trying to move the product. I was talking to a guy, he sells tons and tons of this herring and it all goes to Egypt. It all goes to Russia. It all goes to...I mean it's amazing. This fish feeds the world. It needs to be taken care of. It needs to be helped, not hurt. That's really, really...cause we are the industry.

Tech: I think that's a good place to end it unless you have anything else you want to say or you have then you want to say.

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