

Martha's Vineyard Surfcasters Association

APRIL 2006 Newsletter

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Spring is here and all is well! Unlike the last few years, this past winter was quite mild. It never even got cold enough to allow any ice fishing and I think I only broke out the snow shovel on two or three occasions. As we all know though, a mild winter does not mean a mild spring here on the Vineyard. It always seems to go from cold to hot with no in-between. Last year it seemed like it didn't get warm until June as we endured lots of NE wind during the month of May. This year, with any luck, we'll see that wind come more out of the SW, it'll be mild and the rip at Wasque will be loaded with fish! As for now, I'm organizing my tackle, taking inventory, and waiting for the schoolies to return. Don't forget to let us know when you catch the first striper of 28 inches or better!

As always, when spring returns, so does another busy season for the MVSA. The events we hold and participate in require planning and participation. Our club has grown tremendously over the past few years and it's a great way for new members to become involved. Whether it's helping bait hooks for the Safe Haven Kids, planning the menu for the Summer Picnic, or organizing the Chappy Shark Tournament, any contribution is welcomed.

Our fund raising efforts at the Annual Banquet this past January were the most successful in club history. This is the first newsletter to come out since then so I would like to thank everyone who played a role in our achievement. The funds we raise allow us to give back to our community and this year we will be doing a lot of that. It's something we can all feel very proud of. If anyone has any new thoughts on how we can further accomplish this please bring it to the attention club.

I'm looking forward to working with everyone towards having another safe and successful year for the MVSA! As for the fishing.....good luck to all of you during the 2006 season!

Tight Lines,
Jeff Sayre

Awards Ceremony & Banquet

The best kept secret of the winter season appears to be a secret no more as a standing room only crowd of more than 100 MVSA members and guests attended our Annual Banquet and Awards Ceremony. Guest speaker was Sergeant Pat Grady, Regional Fisheries & Wildlife Officer for the State of MA.

This very popular event celebrates the accomplishments of the top MVSA anglers by awarding handsome plaques for outstanding achievement during the past year. Plaques were presented to twenty-five members in a number of different categories in both the open and senior divisions. The event also serves as our primary fundraiser for the year. A record \$6000 was raised and will be donated back to the community through the MV Rod & Gun Club Trout Derby, The Boys & Girls Club, the MV Big Brothers/Big Sisters program, the Red Stocking Fund and the MVRHS Fishing Club.

Special thanks go out to Chuck Hodgkinson and Paula Sullivan. Paula for organizing the kitchen crew and food, and Chuck and his committee of prize solicitors who did another outstanding job obtaining some highly coveted items for our raffle table and silent auction, including an autographed Johnny Damon baseball, Chappy Ferry tickets, Cape Air tickets, Vineyard Propane fuel, and a hand carved game-fish sculptures by Strong Woodworking of NH and much more.

Our thanks also go out to our kitchen crew and banquet committee including Ralph Peckham, Ron & Barbara Domurat, Jeff Sayre. Phil Cronin, Walter & Jane Lison, Gary Mirando, Phil & Alice Upham, Arnie Ziemian, Will & Sue Geresy, Tom Smith, the Digiantommaso family, Ebba Hierta, Winn Crocker, Bob Ozczyz, Dan Geary Andrew Keenan, Bob Lane, Mark Wrabel, Jim Jackson and anyone else we may have inadvertently omitted.

We are extremely grateful to more than 100 merchants who donated more than \$12,000 in merchandise to our raffle and auction. Please patronize these merchants and thank them for their generosity. Without it we would not be able to continue our support of Island charities and events. *Special thanks to Captain Bob Blanchard as well as Roy Hayes for their extra generous donations.*

2006 MVSA RAFFLE DONORS

RESTAURANTS/FOOD

David Ryan's	Seafood Shanty	Wharf Pub
Your Market	Harry's Deli	Soigne Restaurant
The Net Result	Vineyard Cash & Carry	WMVY Radio
Linda Jean's	Paul Schultz	The Captain's Table
Our Market	Cronig's Market	Wrap & Roll Café
Stop & Shop	Al's Package Store	Depot Market
Woodland Variety & Grill	Among The Flowers Café	Murdick's Fudge
Season's Eatery & Pub	Dippin Donuts	Square Rigger
Louis' Tisbury Eatery & Take Out	Off Shore Ale Company	

FISHING EQUIPMENT

Roberts Lures	Larry's Tackle Shop	Bobby Blanchard
Charles Harner	Point Jude Lures	Ray Faini Reel Repair
MV Derby Committee	Spofford Lures	David Skok
Phil & Jay Cronin	Line Stretcher Tackle Co.	Sandra Demel
Woody Lures	Dr. Slick Company	Marsh Bryan
Menemsha Texaco	Cap't. Porky's Tackle	Skipper Fishing Trips
Trustees of Reservations	The Surfcaster Mail Order	Coop's Bait & Tackle
County of Duke's County	Hab's Lures	Cabela's
Gary Mirando	Ed "Bonito Ed" LaPore	AquaSkinz
Acme Tackle Company	West Marine	Super Strike Lures
Shimano American Corp.	Ron Domurat	

CLOTHING & ACCESSORIES

Soft As A Grape	Dr. David Finkelstein	Laughing Bear
Above Ground Records	Claudia's	Summer Shades
Jess & Linda Talbott	Sun Dog	Black Dog
Vineyard Cleaners	Imperial Headwear	Trader Fred's
Island Taxidermy		

HARDWARE & SUPPLIES

DaRosa's	E.C. Cottle's	Vineyard Propane
Herring Creek Marine	Vineyard Home Center	Phillips Hardware
Airport Mobile	Granite Ace Hardware	Jardin Mahoney
NAPA Auto Parts	Martha's Vineyard Shipyard	SBS The Grain Store
Vineyard Auto Supply	Hinkley Ace Hardware	

SERVICES

Cape Air/Nantucket Airlines
Hair By Dana
Entertainment Cinemas
Clarion Hotel
Mohegan Sun Casino

The Boston Red Sox
Island Entertainment
Chappy Ferry
Foxwoods Resort & Casino

The Boston Bruins
Strong Woodworking
Bob & Fran Clay
Mansion House

HOUSEWARES

Mardells
Island Electronics/Radio Shack
Cap't. Seagull Nautical Charts
Edgartown Scrimshaw Gallery
Ron & Barbara Domurat

Rainy Day Gift Shop
Guy Harvey Publishing
Nicholas Thayer Ceramics
MV Gift Certificate.com
The Toy Box

Off The Wall
Brickman's
Peter Simon
LeRoux Home Center
Phil Craig

MVSA RAFFLE SOLICITORS

Bob and Fran Clay, Ron and Barbara Domurat, Gary Mirando, Phil and Alice Upham, Howell Kelly, Jeff Sayre, Paul Schultz, Paula Sullivan, Bob Lane, Tom and Mary Kowalski, Dave and Judy Cuniffe, Tom Smith, Chuck Hodgkinson,

Trustees to Manage Norton Point Beach

More than a year and a half ago, a group from the MVSA met with Chris Kennedy, the Regional Director of the Cape & Islands for The Trustees of Reservations to explore the possibility of the Trustees taking over the management of Norton Point Beach (NPB). The Committee was acting on behalf of MVSA members who were fed up with poor management that included lengthy beach closures that essentially closed access to many of their favorite fishing spots. The meeting set the wheels in motion for what became a full-fledged effort, which at times became cumbersome and exasperating. Encouraged by the initial meeting, the committee continued to meet with various officials from Dukes County, the Trustees and the Town of Edgartown. On March 31, 2006, the idea became a reality when the County and the Trustees signed a five-year agreement that effectively turns over all aspects of beach management at NPB to the Trustees. Ownership of the beach will remain with the County.

The Trustees will be responsible for the administration of the OSV permitting process as well as shorebird management, beach maintenance and security. The Trustees will also provide shorebird technical assistance for County beaches at Eastsville and Sylvia State Beach where the County will hire it's own seasonal shorebird monitors.

The agreement took effect on April 1, 2006 and calls for initial clean-up efforts to be completed within 45 days. The clean up effort will include the removal of abandoned fence posts, the erection of new signage and the delineation of trails.

The five-year agreement calls for an annual review of the operation and will renew automatically for an additional five years providing there are no objections from either party. The agreement also contains an escape clause should un-resolvable differences arise regarding the operation. The Trustees will bear the financial responsibilities of the operation. All net revenues that exceed the cost of management will be split with 80% going to the Trustees and 20% to the County.

The Trustees are pleased with the agreement and the opportunity to provide some much needed management to NPB. Chris Kennedy promises a "very open process" in which users will be kept up to speed on decisions, particularly regarding shorebird management and beach closures. Kennedy says beach users deserve to know when and why. He described the initial job ahead as a "daunting task" and asks that beach users "cut us some slack" as

they are taking over late in the preparation season. Kennedy also cautions that there may still be beach closures as they are mandated by State and Federal Governments to protect endangered species of birds. But with good management any closure should be of shorter duration than in years past.

Trustees Superintendent Dave Belcher, who will be charged with the day-to-day hands on operation of the beach, says initial plans call for the placement of a guardhouse near the entrance to the beach just off the left fork. In addition, an air compressor will be installed near the bicycle rack on the east side of Katama Road near Mattakesset. In addition, the Trustees initially plan to provide 24-hour ranger coverage and intend to redefine fencing along vehicle trails and improve the signage along trails and turnouts. One significant change will be the availability of daily OSV permits at a cost of \$20 for residents and \$30 for non-residents. Annual permits will be available at a cost of \$60 for residents and \$100 for non-residents. The permit will include access to NPB only. Permits to the Trustees property on Chappaquiddick will be sold separately but a discount of \$10 per permit will be offered to those wishing to purchase permits to both properties.

The takeover of NPB by the Trustees provides a breath of fresh air to all user groups as the Trustees have proven themselves to be good stewards of the beach. MVSA Vice President and Access Committee member Walter Lison heralds the change saying, "we've come a long way! I can't believe it finally happened." Walter doesn't see any downside and believes anglers will benefit from better access and shorter closures as well as better communications. He also sees the elimination of "loose cannons" that frequent the beach during late night hours.

Short Casts

Last Issue-We are purging our membership list, which in this case means if you have not paid your 2006 dues, this will be your last newsletter. ***Please renew your membership now!!!!*** Our 2006 dues schedule is: Families \$35, Individual \$25, Senior Individual (over 65) \$15, Senior Family \$25, Junior (under 16) \$10.

Membership List-Up to date membership lists are available by calling or e-mailing Ron Domurat @ 508-627-4956 or rd_bjr@msn.com.

Don Mohr-The Mayor of East Beach, Derby Hall of Famer & good friend to all, Don Mohr is recuperating at the Martha's Vineyard Hospital after a serious illness. Get-well wishes and messages of encouragement may be sent to Don C/O Martha's Vineyard Hospital, Oak Bluffs, MA 02568. Visits are also welcome.

Annual Beach Clean-up Scheduled for May 13-MVSA members are invited to participate in the annual "Earth Day" beach clean-up sponsored by the Vineyard Conservation Society. As in past years, MVSA is sponsoring clean up of South Beach. We will meet at the left fork parking lot at 10:00 and clean along the beach, parking area and vehicle trails. Depending on beach conditions and the number of volunteers, we will try to clean-up the parking areas at right and left fork as well as the beach from Norton Point to as far west as beach travel will allow. Supplies and containers will be available. If you would like to volunteer, please call Jeff Sayre at 693-4841 or Dave Nash at 627-4867 so we can get a volunteer count.

VCS is also interested in obtaining additional volunteer groups to sponsor/adopt other beaches island-wide. If you know of any groups or organizations who would like to fulfill their community service mandates or just help support Earth Day activities, please contact Dave Nash at the above number or Sarah Parks at VCS (693-9588).

Trustees looking for help-With the recent management takeover at Norton Point Beach, Superintendent Dave Belcher is looking for help. Specifically a full time ranger for the midnight to 8:00AM shift and full & part time gatehouse staff. Dave can be reached @ 508-627-7689 or capepoge@ttor.org

Derby Committee-MVSA members Paula Sullivan, Chuck Hodgkinson and Ron Domurat recently joined the MVSB & BF Derby Committee. The trio joins MVSA members Charlie Barr, Shirley Craig, President Ed Jerome, Cooper Gilkes, Janet Messineo and Bob Lane on the twenty-member committee.

Striped Bass Gamefish 2006- Stripers Forever, the International Game Fish Association, The American Sportfishing Association and the Federation of Fly Fisherman will sponsor a symposium to discuss current status and concerns, as well as the future of striped bass. Presentations will be made by noted scientists, fishery managers and economists and will include the management and economics of striped bass as a game-fish and striped bass aquaculture. The event will begin at 1:00PM will be held be held at Christina's in Foxboro, MA. A banquet and auction will follow the symposium. Additional info can be obtained on the Stripers Forever web-site www.striperforever.org

Striper Wars-Most striped bass anglers today are totally unaware of how close to total extinction the fish was. Striper Wars tells the story as well as how David vs. Goliath effort by a relatively handful of people virtually pulled the striped bass back from the edge of the abyss to the current levels of abundance we enjoy today. Author Dick Russell who has ties to the Vineyard has written an outstanding book that tells the story of that effort and his own involvement in it. The book also tells of current efforts to keep stocks at their current levels and the environmental and economic challenges that pull in the opposite direction. Striper Wars is must reading for every angler that wets a line for striped bass. The book is now available in paperback and can be purchased at Island book stores. We highly recommend it!

Early Season Stripers-The fishing season is upon us and by the time you receive this, you may already have put your first spring schoolie on the beach! Last year the first migrating striper caught by a club member was on April 9 by Al Angelone. The first keeper was caught by George Gomez on May 5 and the first bluefish was caught by Russ Lawrence on May 5. Early season hot spots include the Right Fork on South Beach, Wasque Point, any of the pond openings and the Big Bridge. Good bets for lures are small Storm Shads, Spofford Joppa Jigs and 1oz hammers fished slowly near the bottom. The sensitivity of braided line also helps as early season strikes can be very subtle.

What a Can of Worms-Finally, a veteran MVSA member (who will forever remain unidentified) recently decided to take advantage of some good weather to do some trout fishing. He packed his gear in the car including his favorite trout rod & reel and grabbed a can of garden worms he had imported from off-island. When he arrived at his favorite spot, he unpacked his gear, set up his rod holder and reached for his can of worms only to discover he had brought a can of varnish instead! Needless to say it put a nice 'finish' on his day of fishing.

BE A WINNER IN THE 2006 MVSA IN-HOUSE DERBY

The rules are easy and the challenge among members is a lot of fun whether you're fishing from shore or boat for blues, bass, bonito, or albies.

HOW TO ENTER -----

You must be a paid in full member before catching and weighing in any fish.

1. Use the enclosed weigh-in slip as a master and make as many copies as you need.
2. When you catch a fish you want to enter, bring the fish to any island tackle shop and have the weigher sign and date the slip.
3. To be eligible for consideration fish must conform to the minimum sizes below:

Striped bass 32"
Bluefish 22"
Bonito 21"
False Albacore 25"

4. **Boundaries:** To be eligible, a fish must be caught in or around the waters of Martha's Vineyard. MVS&B & BF Derby Boundaries will prevail.
5. **Mail the slip to:**

Paul Schultz
PO Box 1245
Edgartown, MA 02539

Entry forms must be received before the fifth of the following month.

During the fall MV Bass & Bluefish Derby, there is no need to fill out our weigh-in slip; simply **mail** in the official MV Derby weigh-in slip or a copy of it to Paul.

DIVISIONS AND AWARDS

Divisions are the following: Junior (under 16), Adult (16 through 64), Senior (65 & up). The categories for the four species are as follows: All Tackle Shore, All Tackle Boat, Fly Rod Shore, Fly Rod Boat, and our special Release Award for both All Tackle and Fly Rod. Awards are made for the heaviest fish in each of the four categories. In addition, awards are also given for the longest fish in each of the four categories that was caught and then released. Record the **overall length of your released fish, not the weight**, in the weight section of the slip and be sure to mark it clearly: **'RELEASE'**

Finally don't forget the *Grand Slam* category that was added last year. Plaques will be awarded to the boat & shore anglers who, over the course of the season, weigh in the heaviest aggregate (total weight) of all four eligible species. Anglers must catch all of their fish in the division entered. (i.e. all boat or all shore)

GOOD LUCK AND HAVE FUN!

Spring Beach Report

The news is mostly good, particularly on Chappy. East Beach, from out front of Dike Bridge past Leland's Point all the way to the Wasque Rip is nice and wide and appears to be re-building after winter storms. Wasque Point has added beach and unless something changes over the next few weeks, or nesting plovers present problems, we should be able to travel the entire length of East Beach from Dike Bridge all the way to the Wasque Rip where there will be room to park.

North of the Dike Bridge toward Cape Poge, Arruda Point and the area around the jetties north to the bluffs under the lighthouse, took a pounding from winter storms but appear to be rebuilding and should be open to OSV traffic. The only exception is Arruda Point that still has to build out a bit before it is reopened to vehicle traffic.

The bad news is that Norton Point Beach and points east and west got beaten up pretty badly this winter. As you drive through the dunes to access Norton Point Beach, what used to be a wide expanse of beach has been cut back by at least forty yards. As you continue to travel east on the inside trail toward Chappy, there currently is no place to cut back out to the front beach until you are within about ¼ mile from the Katama flats and Metcalf's Hole, which also took another pounding this year.

Saltwater License in the Works???

Someday in the not too distant future there is a chance that saltwater anglers may face some surprising news - the introduction of a saltwater fishing license. And many nationally recognized conservation groups and fishing organizations who once adamantly fought it are now embracing it as a smart move on the grounds that it is an effective way to measure the economic impact of recreational anglers.

Federal legislators will soon be re-enacting the Magnuson Steven Act (MSA) that was first passed in 1976. The Act was originally designed to protect stocks fished for by America's commercial fleets from pressure by foreign fleets. The Act established an Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) for U.S. fisherman within 200 miles of our coastline. The Act also gave fisheries management powers to a series of regional councils composed of fishermen, scientists and state agencies. However, many times as in the case of the New England Fisheries Management Council, commercial interests dominated these bodies and if a choice had to be made between profits and fish, many times the fish lost. In addition, as sport and commercial fishermen came into ever increasing conflict over coastal species, sport fishermen usually ended up on the wrong end of any regulations that were passed, as the commercial lobby usually had the numbers to back up their claims of economic supremacy.

But things are changing!

The re-authorization of the MSA has given Congress an opportunity to consider the economic impact of recreational fishing. Many anglers believe that one of the most effective ways to prove the economic importance of recreational angling is with numbers and a broad coalition of both sportfishing and conservation groups are supporting provisions that would establish a system of state wide saltwater licenses. Coalition leaders believe that licenses will provide evidence that in most coastal areas, recreational fishing is now the dominant economic driving force and that recreational anglers should have the louder voice in fisheries management.

Trouble on the Horizon-or not???

A recent MVSA web-site survey question asked; how do you rate striped bass fishing in relation to where it was ten years ago? Eighty five per cent of the respondents said it was better! In a follow up question, 46% said the fish were bigger with the remainder split between the same and smaller. Veteran surf angler and author Frank Daigneault says that with one exception, spawning classes over the last fifteen years have been good to excellent and this year, the 1993 class will provide a group of decent sized stripers in the 28 to 38 pound class and the record class of 1996 will provide big numbers of 17 to 18 lb. fish. ***But are things really as rosy as they appear on the surface???***

Recent studies of striped bass in Chesapeake Bay which is the worlds principal spawning ground and the primary producer of the stripers we catch on the Vineyard, indicate that Mycobacteriosis, a disease that kills striped bass and can cause a severe skin infection in humans has spread to nearly three quarters of the stripers in the bay. The disease also sends a disturbing message about the health of the ecosystem in the bay and additional studies suggest that since the illness was discovered, non-fishing mortality of stripers in the upper bay region has tripled. But at the same time, scientists are also puzzled by why anglers are catching plenty of fish.

Although scientists have so far been unable to prove it, many studies show that declines in the amount of menhaden in the diet of striped bass coincides with the appearance of the disease. Thanks to Omega Proteins slaughter of more than 230 million pounds of menhaden each year, 70% of which comes out of Chesapeake Bay, menhaden no longer perform their missions of providing food for animals higher up on the food chain or as filter feeders of plankton, which is now choking the bay.

With Atlantic Herring stocks taking a big hit from the offshore commercial fleet, scientists believe the food supply of stripers is severely diminishing. Many believe that if we lose the prey species, we will lose the stripers again and if that occurs, it will take many years to recover the population.

But are we seeing problem signs in the coastal waters of the Vineyard and should we be concerned about Mycobacteriosis? It may be too early in the game to tell but a final MVSA web-site question in the series about stripers dealt with the apparent health of the stripers we catch. Sixty seven per cent said they thought the fish were very healthy and not one respondent suggested they caught unhealthy fish.

As to Mycobacteriosis, the disease presents no health risk to humans from eating the fish as cooking kills the bacteria. However, the disease can cause a skin infection which is not life threatening but can cause severe joint problems.

Fishing Pier

The MVSA recently sent the following letter to the State of MA, Office of Environmental Affairs.

State of Massachusetts
Executive Office of Environmental Affairs
100 Cambridge St.
Suite 900
Boston, MA 02114

Attn. Dierdre Buckley, MEPA Analyst

RE: Oak Bluffs Ferry Pier Reconstruction

Dear Ms. Buckley,

This submittal concerns the lack of public access provisions in the plans for the above referenced project currently in your office for review. I am writing on behalf of the Martha's Vineyard Surfcasters Association.

The Martha's Vineyard Surfcasters Association (MVSA) promotes recreational fishing opportunities on Martha's Vineyard. We strive to encourage sportsmanship and an awareness and appreciation of conservation opportunities by promoting sound practices. We sponsor a variety of youth and children oriented activities throughout the year. We participate in community sponsored events such as earth day beach clean-up programs and related activities.

One of our primary goals is to seek out and protect public access opportunities as they relate to not only fishing but also to coastal access opportunities which would also promote general awareness of the value of coastal resources.

It is with great concern that we note that the proposed reconstruction of the Oak Bluffs Ferry Pier lacks provisions for public access. Years ago, this pier was available for public access and even now serves as the site for a kid's fishing tournament through the generosity of the Steamship Authority. In the initial planning stages, public access was favorably considered for this project but has unfortunately been abandoned in the final application.

We understand that concerns over cost, liability and security are among the reasons that this approach has been taken. While we do not have the benefit of knowing the detail supporting the reasons for these decisions, it is not hard to understand that these are serious issues. We feel it is in the best interest of the public that any evaluation incorporates a thorough review of why public access has been eliminated from this project.

Some general points we would like to be to consider include the following;

There is little public access except from shore along a considerable stretch of beach on this part of the island. Access to fishing opportunities for children, the handicapped or the elderly are therefore severely limited.

Any pier reconstruction which encroaches on existing coastal areas represents a further reduction of fishing access to the general public.

Liability issues would seem to be addressed by the provisions of the Chapter 91 permit review process which would suggest that an applicant is not liable for such additions to a project providing they are not negligible.

Security issues would clearly need to be considered by the Steamship Authority but fishing and general access to the pier could be designated to areas apart from and separate from those portions of the ferry pier which are intended to serve the vehicles and passengers for which it is designed.

We appreciate this opportunity to offer comments during the review process and we are hopeful that they can be favorably considered.

Sincerely,

David Nash
Environmental Action Chair
Martha's Vineyard Surfcasters Association

Calendar

April 18, 2006

Safe Haven Kids Fishing Day
10:00AM, Duarte's Pond
Jeff Sayre, 508-693-4841

May 6, 2006

MV Rod & Gun Club Kids Trout Derby
Duarte's Pond, 6:30AM
Jeff Sayre, 508-693-4841

May 13, 2006 Annual Beach Clean-up

Norton Point Beach, *Bring work gloves & fishing rod!*
Dave Nash 508-627-4867

June 13, 2006, Monthly Meeting

7:00PM, Rod & Gun Club
Jeff Sayre, 508-693-4841

July 8, 2005, Summer Picnic

5:00PM, Bend in the Road Beach, Edgartown
Phil Horton, 508-693-6979

July 22-August 6, 2006, MVSA Chappy Shark Tournament

Russ Lawrence, 508-627-9670