

To Celebrate Two Old Salts, The Nessel Brothers

By Kitty Merrill

the Independent

May 28, 2014



(click for larger version)

By Kitty Merrill

Richie Nessel isn't so sure being called an "old timer" is a compliment. "I don't know how I got this old," he remarked during a recent jibe-laced text conversation. Whether he truly qualifies as an Old Salt is a topic for future discussion . . . on June 5, for example.

That night he and his brother Jacob will be the honorees at the Annual Montauk Harbor Old Timers Dinner hosted by the Montauk Chamber of Commerce. The event is the brainchild of long time chamber member Carl Darenberg.

"I wanted to do this because the historic aspect of fishing in Montauk, it's gonna be gone someday. There aren't that many people left who can talk about old Montauk, when fishing was fishing and we didn't have all these regulations and quotas."

Past honorees have included Captain Paul Forsberg of the Viking fleet, the Gosman family, The Deep Sea Club, The Yacht Club, members of the commercial fleet and members of the charter boat fleet.

Darenberg said he chose this year's honorees because Richie Nessel kept coming up to him and nagging "Hey, Carl, I'm an old timer, why don't you choose me?"

Richie and Jacob Nessel have made their living fishing in Montauk for over 50 years. They own their own boats and have also worked on various charter and party boats in the harbor.

Richie, who captains the "Nasty Ness," recently received the Chester Wolf IGFA Sportsman Award at the First Annual Shark's Eye Tournament, which is a tag and release event to promote conservation of sharks.

Richie was also instrumental in easing this year's NY State fishing regulations and catch limits, specifically addressing the summer flounder restrictions. Concerned about the inequity -- neighboring states' regulations are less stringent than New York's -- he reached out to Governor Andrew Cuomo and invited him for a day of fishing on his boat, along with "crew" member Billy Joel.

With a new awareness, Cuomo successfully lobbied for a change in the daily bag limits by the DEC, which will have a very positive impact on charter and party boat business in Montauk Harbor this summer.

Jacob Nessel began fishing in Montauk with his dad back in 1951. By 1955, fifteen-year-old Jake was already working as a deckhand on Montauk party boats on weekends and summer vacations. Captain Jake spent the next 15 years running the Marlin 3, 4 and 5. His own charter boat, "Sportfisher," fished in 1994 and 1995 and since 1996 he has captained the Marlin 5/Ebb Tide.

Captain Jake's many fishing highlights include two 18 pound fluke, a women's world record 55 pound codfish and the current 50 pound world record codfish of 85 pounds. Jake also won the first ever Marine Basin Shark Tournament (then called Fins and Feathers) landing a 320 pound Mako.

The dinner takes place at the Clam and Chowder House at Salivar's from 5 to 8 PM. Tickets for the event are \$40, which includes dinner with wine or beer. The evening begins at 5 PM with a roast of both brothers and dinner will follow. Tickets are available at the Montauk Chamber of Commerce office, or by calling 631-668-2428. There is also an option to pay online by going to www.montaukchamber.com, then scroll to the "Events" tab and use PayPal or a credit card to purchase a ticket.