



## Films, book provide engaging look at fisheries issues

By Shlomit Auciello  
*The Herald Gazette Reporter*

(Oct 4): Two recent, locally produced films bring attention to Maine's fishing heritage. In his feature length documentary "The Fish Belong to the People," writer and director William Hyler records the efforts of Port Clyde fishermen to gain control of a livelihood that has been slipping away. Ryan Post's "Maine Buggin" is a 30-minute instructional video that presents the basics of lobster fishing for students and others who want to learn more about this important part of the local economy.

### Advertisement

K. Stephens' novel "The Ghost Trap" uses fictional characters to draw the reader into the complex and often disheartening world of lobstering families in the small peninsular towns of Knox County. This summer, Stephens and Post worked together to promote their projects.



### 'Maine Buggin'

Ryan Post is a fourth-generation lobsterman who was born and raised in Rockland. His family owns and fishes from Metinic Island, which lies about 10 miles from the mainland, between Port Clyde and Matinicus.

At a reading in the lobby of the Island Institute Sept. 9, Post said he made "Maine Buggin" to help people understand what makes Maine lobsters — locally known as bugs — special. Taking viewers from the day traps are set out to the time of the boat races that celebrate the height of the summer season, Post explains the processes and strategies that lobstermen employ to bring their harvest to tables around the world.

The Maine lobster fishery was primarily self-regulated until about a decade ago, and the film describes methods such as V-notching egg-bearing females and limiting the size of the lobsters that can be taken.

"We are true conservatives," Post said. "The only sustainable lobster fishery in the world."

Aboard his 40-foot lobsterboat *Instigator*, Post introduces viewers to topics that range from bait to boat races, sharing the basics of his trade in a clear and entertaining manner. The film is divided into nine chapters that explain the challenges and concerns facing those who risk the dangers of the sea to support their families in one of the few remaining fisheries where one and two-person crews prevail.

"Maine Buggin" is available at Archipelago and The Reading Corner in Rockland,

and through the Web site at [mainebuggin.com](http://mainebuggin.com).

### 'The Ghost Trap'

The hazards of the sea combine with the difficulties of family life in a small community in K. Stephens' first novel.

Stephens is an arts and entertainment writer who has taken the culture of lobstering and coastal life and woven a narrative of gear conflicts, lost love and the hope for



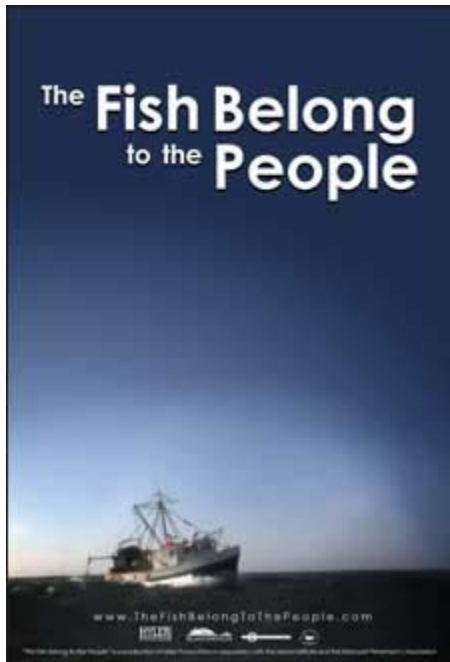
redemption.

Jamie Eugley is a young man caught between his dreams and his commitments. His fiancée, Anja, suffered brain damage in a boating incident and his family is embroiled in a battle for control of the fishing grounds that have been their unofficial territory for generations. Trapped by his losses and without a chart, Eugley must navigate the waters of human relationship.

Stephens uses language that is rich with description and her dialogue rings with the accents of the Maine Coast. Her descriptions of the Eugley family, of Jamie's friends and the upscale college students he comes to know, create strong characters that engage the reader and bring the enigmatic culture of lobstering communities to life.

Jamie Eugley's search for the spark that once lit Anja's eyes, and for the solace that a life at sea brings far too rarely, is a worthwhile journey for anyone who shares an interest in the coast and the people who harvest its bounty.

"The Ghost Trap" is published by Leapfrog Press and is available at Archipelago and The Reading Corner in Rockland and through the Owl & Turtle Bookshop in Camden. For more information, visit the Web site at [theghosttrap.com](http://theghosttrap.com).



### 'The Fish Belong to the People'

The history of fishing in the Gulf of Maine is a complex story of individualism, technology, regulation and family.

In "The Fish Belong to the People" filmmaker William Hyler uses old still and motion picture images and current footage of the lives of Port Clyde fishermen to illustrate the multiple and converging time lines of industry, culture and invention. The story he tells illuminates the challenges and innovations that make Maine's fisheries an allegory for humanity's relentless growth and the creative abilities that fuel it.

Interviews with Midcoast Fishermen's Association Chairman Glen Libby and a number of other local fishermen demonstrate the harvesters' awareness of an overzealous efficiency that has brought many fish species to the edge of extinction. Footage of the early dawn departures and rough seas that these people encounter in their work illustrates a story of a community brought to the brink of disaster, controlled by agencies of a distant government and becoming proactive in its own defense.

"You go out and bring the fish to the people that own them," Libby says of the mandate he feels to harvest a public resource for those who live on the land.

"The Fish Belong to the People" is a full-length documentary about how local fishermen are working to preserve their way of life. (Image courtesy of William Hyler Productions)

With the assistance of the Island Institute, the MFA has created Port Clyde Fresh Catch, a direct method of reaching markets through a community supported fishery that mimics the way some farmers have made year-round partners of their customers.

As small-scale food producers and other entrepreneurs across Maine and the United States and around the world face the challenges presented by over-efficient technologies, "The Fish Belong to the People" describes the meeting of fishermen, government regulators, environmental advocates and the marketplace.

"It's a willingness to be less efficient for the good of the resource," Libby says of his community's efforts to redesign their gear and the regulatory structure that defines their daily existence.

Fourth-generation Port Clyde fisherman Randy Cushman sees the collaboration as a possible way to continue his family's traditional way of life. Libby, calling himself an optimist, says his goal is to prove wrong the skeptics who claim the fisheries are finished.

"I'd like to see a fifth generation," Cushman says in the film.

"The Fish Belong to the People" will premiere at the Strand Theatre as part of the Camden International Film Festival on Saturday, Oct. 3 at 4 p.m.

For more information about the festival, visit [camdenfilmfest.org](http://camdenfilmfest.org) or call 617-817-5376. Learn more about Hyler's film at [willhyler.com/HylerProductions/Home.html](http://willhyler.com/HylerProductions/Home.html).



Ryan Post, left, and K. Stephens are working together to promote their lobster-related work. (Photo by Shlomit Auciello)

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