Hurley Conklin Award Winner - 2016



Captain Joel E. Mick
Photo credit: Victoria Ford

Joel Mick, born in 1947 in Jenkins Neck, knew from a young age that his true calling was fishing. His introduction to the water was aboard his maternal grandfather's charter boat, the *Alpat*. He later served in the Navy aboard aircraft carriers in Guantanamo Bay.

His family on his dad's side owned hundreds of acres in the Pines where they farmed blueberries and cranberries with a bog system engineered by his paternal grandfather and namesake.

"I always said I had the best of both worlds," he said, referring to hunting and farming in the woods and fishing in the ocean and the bay. He also enjoyed a 25-year career with the Atlantic City Fire Department. This year is Mick's 46th year running the charter boat. He would clam on his days off, run charters, or both, plus work the cranberry farm. "I was going three different ways for years," he said.

The boat he has now, the Evelynn Ann, named for his wife, was custom built by Jack Henriques in Bayville. "It's been the best boat I've ever had under me," he said – she's his fourth. His third, the *Melody II*, at the end of her run he donated to Tuckerton Seaport for educational purposes.

He inherited a lot of the business from the *Alpat* – regulars from the Philly, Trenton and local area. At the height, he would take out about 125 trips a year. "Even today, as third-generation, I still take some of the families that went with my grandfather," he said. "That's gratifying."

He gives a lot of credit for his professional success and longevity to the more experienced captains for passing along their wisdom to him.

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Steve C. Frazee
Photo credit: Victoria Ford

Steve Frazee is a woodsman, like his father before him. Born in 1948 and raised in Forked River, he has worked in the woods all his life and spent his share of time in the bay, fishing, crabbing and clamming. From his dad he learned every imaginable kind of tree job – hauling logs, cutting survey lines, thinning the woods and brush, and the art of the controlled burn.

He started running the saw mill in his 20s, making and selling all sorts of useful wood products for commercial and residential uses, including channel markers, fencing, paneling, siding, pilings, sign posts, snow fence posts, boards for boat building and pine pulp for paper.

He built both his and his sister's houses. Lately he supplies cedar to boat builders and decoy carvers.

In all the years he has operated the sawmill, Frazee has had nary an incident, injury, scratch or even close call, simply by being careful.

He suspects it's a dying art form. "There was 100 mills back in the '30s," he said. "And you could see that wasn't going to last. I think there's two mills left."

These days he does a lot of fishing, and using leftover wood from downed trees in Waretown to build benches, chairs, stools, bird boxes and the like. "It's just a hobby now, pretty much. But I got a bunch of wood sitting there, dry, ready to sell, or ready to make stuff."