

*This month:*

**W**e consider this month's issue of *Collaborations* some what special. It is, after all, the publication's one-year anniversary and the beginning of a new approach for how the monthly newsletter is presented.

Since March of this year, we have focused our efforts on "catching up" on many of the ongoing and completed cooperative research projects that have taken place in the Gulf of

Maine. Beginning with this issue, we will now be spending more time with individual fishermen, scientists and resource managers in

order to present a more in-depth examination of the collaborative research process in the commercial fishing industry.

While many fishermen and scientist may remain skeptical or cynical about the process of collaborative research, many more others are beginning to embrace the concept and still others — such as Bill Lee of Rockport, Mass., — are becoming outspoken supporters when it comes to talking about why cooperative research is more important now than ever before.

Lee's enthusiasm for the process

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**RFPs for Collaborative Research Projects released**

*see page 2*



**COLLABORATIVE CHAMPION** — Bill Lee of Rockport, Mass., takes a moment to pose in front of his boat, which he designed and built in 1986

*Fishing for Answers*

*Bill Lee says collaborative research is the best way to deal with New England's fishing problems*

**By RANDY SEAVER**

**B**ill Lee happily mutters to himself as he cleans the deck of his boat. Like hundreds of other fishermen throughout New England, Lee — of Rockport, Mass. — has been hit hard by recent changes in federal groundfishing rules, but unlike many of his colleagues he has found an innovative way to soften the blow.

As he works to remove debris from renovations he recently made to the wheelhouse of his 43-foot trawler (F/V Ocean Reporter), Lee says U.S. District

Court Judge Gladys Kessler most likely had no idea about how her April 26 decision would affect the fishing industry. But on this otherwise perfect day — with clear skies and calm seas — Lee's biggest complaint is about the lack of available parking spaces on Rockport's main pier.

"Tourist season hasn't even started, and it's already hard to find a spot down here," he smiles, shrugging his shoulders and carrying a barrel of trash along the dock.

"A lot of these guys don't have any-

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# Saltonstall-Kennedy RFP released

The National Marine Fisheries Service issued a request for proposals under the Saltonstall-Kennedy (S-K) Grant Program. The S-K Program provides financial assistance for research and development projects that address various aspects of U.S. fisheries (commercial or recreational), including, but

not limited to, harvesting, processing, marketing, and associated infrastructures. Fishing capacity reduction, conservation engineering and optimal utilization of harvested resources are some of the priority issues for this year.

**Application must be submitted by the close of business July 15, 2002.**

For more information, check out the complete announcement at: <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/sfweb/skhome.html>.

**NEC, NMFS release  
RFPs  
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## This month

of collaborative research is gaining momentum. As this issue of *Collaborations* goes to press, Lee is planning to host a visit from a New Zealand scientist who is interested in how Lee and his research partner, Dr. Allan Michael, filmed their “baited underwater video” for the Northeast Consortium.

For those interested in the process of collaborative research, a new book is now available that addresses the challenges and benefits of scientists, managers and fishermen working together toward a common goal. *An Investment in Trust: Communication in the Commercial Fishing and Fisheries Management Communities* was written by Jennifer Gilden and Flaxen D.L. Conway, and it may be purchased from Sea Grant Communications at Oregon State University for \$10 (\$7 plus \$3 postage & handling).

In an excerpt from the book’s promotional flyer, an anonymous “south coast trawler” is credited with the following quotation: “*There aren’t any villains. Everybody’s trying to do the right thing. Sometimes we don’t know what it is, and sometimes we don’t have the tools — and sometimes it’s just a difference of opinions.*”

It’s sometimes funny how you can see the benefits of the collaborative process in ordinary day-to-day life, despite the temptation we have to “do things on our own and remaining independent.

Recently, my eldest stepson’s first-grade class presented an end-of-school-year play for their classmates and families. The play featured renditions of famous children’s fables, including the story of a wise old king with three young sons. In the fable, the king gathers his sons in front of the throne and beginning with his oldest child, asks each son to break a group of three sticks. Each son tries grabbing the bunch of sticks, but alas — none of them are strong enough to complete the task on their own. The king then separates the sticks and hands each one of his sons one stick. Of course, each boy is now able to break the stick. Maybe I’ve been working too much lately, but I couldn’t help thinking as I watched that play about the three sons representing a fisherman, a marine biologist and a government official. Individually, they cannot solve the problems at hand. However, by working together and building trust with one another, the task

will become as simple as snapping a twig.

On another front, the subscription list to *Collaborations* keeps growing. We would especially like to welcome the Maryland Waterman’s Association to our list of readers around the globe. The MWA publishes the *Waterman’s Gazette*, edited by Mary Madison who called NAMA this month requesting permission to reprint one of our stories from the May 2002 issue — *A Closer Look at the Bottom*.

For more information about the Maryland Waterman’s Association, you may visit their website at [www.marylandwaterman.com](http://www.marylandwaterman.com)

If you, or someone you know, would like to have a particular project, fisherman or researcher featured in a future issue of *Collaborations*, please do not hesitate to contact us at [www.namanet.org](http://www.namanet.org) or by telephone (888)320-4530.

On a final note, NAMA has just published its Spring 2002 newsletter, which may be viewed on our website. There are a lot of dynamic things taking place in the Gulf of Maine; so if you haven’t already — get out there and get involved!

- Randy Seaver,

**“Collaborations” is a monthly update on the ‘goings on’ of collaborative fisheries research. The Northwest Atlantic Marine Alliance (NAMA), with support from the Northeast Consortium, publishes this update as a service to individuals and groups committed to the future of collaborative research. Please visit us at [www.namanet.org](http://www.namanet.org) and [www.NortheastConsortium.org](http://www.NortheastConsortium.org) to learn more about our organizations.**

# Bill Lee

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thing to do, so they all hang out over at that café [Flav's] all day."

Even before Kessler decided to vacate her order and lighten some of her restrictions late last month, Lee was keeping himself steadily optimistic by participating in a process known as collaborative research.

So instead of rigging his nets for flounder or cod, Lee is installing an underwater camera frame in the net at the stern of his vessel. It's just another way the 54-year-old fisherman has learned to adapt, and that — he says — is what keeps him going.

"I've always been a big believer in the collaborative process," Lee says. "If you think about it, that's the way it should be."

In the past few years, Lee has earned an enviable reputation in collaborative research circles.

"If you ask me, Bill epitomizes the beauty of cooperative research," said Dr. Earl Meredith of the National Marine Fisheries Science Center in Gloucester. Meredith, a marine biologist with the National Marine Fisher-



**OCEAN REPORTER** — Bill Lee envisions himself as a reporter. He wants to share the information he discovers with as many people as possible

ies Service, is a member of the New England Fisheries Management Council's Research Steering Committee.

"Bill is one of those guys who you always love to talk with," Meredith continued. "He's always pumped up about an ongoing project or a new idea. He approaches the process with a lot of enthusiasm."

For his part, Lee says the enthusiasm is just part of a natural evolution that starts when you participate in the collaborative process. He is nonchalant, now focusing his attention on a series of video wires in the wheelhouse of his boat.

There's something unique about the video gear that Lee uses: it's all been built in his basement. For instance, one of the camera frames he built includes an automobile tire. That way, Lee ex-

plains, the underwater camera mounted inside the tire is left undamaged as its housing bounces harmlessly in the net.

Despite the mass of video cables and connectors, Lee is organized about the process of his underwater videotaping. Each camera is designated as either color or black and white, depending on the color of the flange that is mounted to the camera frame. Generally, Lee uses three cameras but he can operate as many as eight.

"Personally, I think this is the way to go," he says, checking each of the wire connections as we prepare to leave the dock. "When you catch the fish on videotape, you're not killing them in order to understand their behavior."

### *Of principles and practicality* —

**B**ill Lee describes himself as a fisherman, not as a scientist. At the same time, he has converted one entire room of his Rockport home into a well-equipped video production facil-



**BUILT FOR ABUSE** — Two of Bill Lee's underwater cameras are mounted in this homemade frame. The camera on the right (with the red flange) shoots black and white images; the other camera shoots in color. Lee says he designs the cameras and their frames to handle the rigors of being used on a commercial fishing vessel.

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# Bill Lee



**TOW PREPARATIONS** — Bill Lee adjusts his trawling nets in order to accommodate one of his self-made underwater camera frames

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ity. And his basement, although similar to many other do-it-yourselfer's basements — featuring a drill press and an entire wall of hanging tools — also houses a vast array of high-tech video cable and underwater camera building equipment.

But Lee didn't start his collaborative research career by producing underwater videos. Instead, it was a chance encounter with an independent marine biologist that got Lee involved in collaborative research.

Dr. Allan Michael first met Bill Lee some 13 years ago, when the city of Gloucester put out bids for water quality samples. According to Michael, there wasn't an instant chemistry between the two men — each of whom was accustomed to working independently.

"Bill is certainly full of energy," Michael says. "Talk about catching a tiger by the tail. I'm just a quiet scientist, but Bill is always on the go, ready to tackle a dozen things all at once. I guess you could say that I'm the steady-

ing influence in our partnership."

That partnership, and acceptance of each other's differences has served both men well. By working together — a quiet scientist and an ambitious fisherman — Lee and Michael have been able to share their resources on a number of collaborative research projects.

Last year, Lee and Michael were awarded a \$35,000 grant from the Northeast Consortium for a project in which they set out to test the effectiveness of a Nordmore-style grate by using underwater videotaping. The grate is placed in the cod end of a trawl net in order to reduce bycatch of non-targeted fish species.

While a typical Nordmore-style grate features vertical bars that are spaced approximately one inch

**“** Talk about catching a tiger by the tail. I'm just a quiet scientist, but Bill is always on the go, ready to tackle a dozen things all at once. **”**

— Dr. Allan Michael

apart, Lee's grate featured horizontal bars that are spaced three inches apart. The modifications, he says, are based upon fish behavior — behavior that he was able to videotape in a video he produced for the Northeast Consortium. In the video, which Lee narrates, flounders are shown swimming with a tendency to swim downward, while cod

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**IT'S A BIRD. . . IT'S A PLANE. . .** Actually, it's just another of Bill Lee's underwater cameras with a frame designed to be towed near the boat's bow

# The Renaissance Man

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— much stronger swimmers — escape the specially designed net by swimming upward.

Despite the effectiveness of Lee's underwater video equipment, he keeps a close eye on the cost of the equipment, working to build things that any other fisherman could do easily and without a lot of money.

"You see the radius on this camera frame?" Lee asks as he moves toward the stern of his boat. "That's the same radius as a standard 5-gallon pail. Show me a fisherman who doesn't have a 5-gallon pail on his boat. Things don't need to be expensive in order to be effective."

As an example, Lee's scientific partner talks about a time early in their relationship when Lee demonstrated his most practical side.

"I was once looking at purchasing a piece of equipment that cost roughly \$12,000," Michael said. "I showed it to Bill, and he built it for me for about \$20. He's very innovative and incredibly motivated."

In fact, Lee built the 43-foot F/V Ocean Reporter from the keel onward in 1986. "I knew what I wanted and I just decided to build it myself," he says with a shrug. He learned welding while serving in the U.S. Navy Seabees during the Vietnam War, but he admits that he has always liked to "tinker with things to figure out how they work."

Lee's curiosity and ingenuity is displayed in the video he produced for the Northeast Consortium. As he narrates through the video images, he meticulously describes every detail of the research project, showing the gear that was used and how the cameras and lighting equipment were placed into the water.

"A lot of it has to be done by trial and error," he says. "You just have to keep trying different things." In the first

few minutes of the tape, Lee tells his viewers that attempts to use color film underwater was complicated by underwater plant species that provided too much camouflage for the fish he hoped to capture on tape. He also details the problems he and Michael encountered when they attempted to use reflective lights during the filming process.

Lee is also not a big believer in proprietary information. (Please turn to page 7)



**IN THE STUDIO** — Like everything else he has undertaken, Lee says his elaborate video production facility is just another result of a continuing process of evolution. Production and distribution of his research videos also allows him an opportunity to earn extra income.

“*Sometimes I think I'm just a dumb fisherman. But if someone like me can do this kind of stuff, there's no reason that other guys can't get involved, too.*”

— Bill Lee



**TOOLS OF THE TRADE** — Some of the portable equipment Lee uses on his boat in order to capture underwater video images.

# NAMA needs *your* support, too

**N**AMA was your voice when a federal judge was considering how to resolve a lawsuit that could have been devastating to the Gulf of Maine's fishing fleet.

NAMA was there when a group of fishermen and others found themselves without a voice in mid-coast Maine, and we offered the assistance and expertise to help form yet another new community-based alliance.

NAMA is continuing to reach out, providing community outreach, educational and support services and helping fishermen and others learn about collaborative research projects.

Since 1995, our organization has continued to grow, and we have been able to make great strides in our efforts "to generate a new voice and institutional presence," within the Gulf of Maine. We are open to all who are committed to our purpose and principles, that will work toward economic and ecological stability, personal responsibility and accountability, resource protection and distributed power and au-

thority."

But as harsh as it may sound, even the most noble of efforts and organizations requires sustainable funding in order to continue in their mission. That's why we are asking you to consider becoming a NAMA affiliate member or to make a tax-deductible contribution so that we may continue our work.

Today, New Englanders are facing daunting challenges, but they are also taking initiatives — organizing themselves to use innovation, science, technology and local knowledge so that the tradition of coastal fishing communities may continue for generations to come.

NAMA has coordinated many of these initiatives, and we stand ready to do more in the weeks and months ahead. Our alliance is a highly respected and fast growing organization that needs some financial support to do what the federal government cannot: to restore and enhance the fisheries of the Gulf of Maine (the waters of Mas-

sachusetts, New Hampshire, and Maine) as well as Maritime Canada.

We can offer you recognition throughout the New England coast as being one who thought enough of the fishermen's traditions, their livelihoods, their communities, and of the marine resources to lend a generous and helpful hand. Please send the most generous check you can to the address below. All contributions are eligible as deductions to a non-profit organization on your income taxes.

Please call or e-mail us with any questions.

Sincerely,  
**Craig Pendleton,**  
Coordinating Director,

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## Northeast Consortium releases RFPs

The *Northeast Consortium* Project Development Funds will provide up to \$25,000 per project to plan, design, and test the feasibility of an idea, try out new gear, or otherwise lay the groundwork for a new cooperative research project or Right Whale research. The *Northeast Consortium* has reserved

\$400,000 in Cooperative Research and Right Whale funds for Project Development awards.

The *Northeast Consortium* especially encourages letters from fishermen. Letter proposals must be received by **4:30pm, Monday, July 1, 2002.**

Letters received after this time and date

will not be considered. For more information, contact Troy Hartley: 603-862-1729, Rollie Barnaby: 603-679-5616, or Rebecca Clauss: 603-862-4034, or visit our website:

[www.NortheastConsortium.org](http://www.NortheastConsortium.org)

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## NMFS/NOAA release RFPs

Proposals are being solicited by the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) under a "Broad Agency Announcement." The proposals should address conservation engineering, documenting and mitigating bycatch mortality and environmental impacts, and fishing gear selectivity affecting the Northeast Multispecies

fishery. These issues have been defined by the New England Fishery Management Council and discussed in the Manomet Center for Conservation Sciences report described in the announcement. Questions regarding proposal submissions may be addressed to [Michelle.R.Morales@noaa.gov](mailto:Michelle.R.Morales@noaa.gov).

For a complete description of the

announcement go to <http://www.eps.gov/spg/DOC/NOAA/EASC/EASC-02-0001/Attachments.html>

**Research proposals must be post-marked or received by 5:00 p.m. July 8, 2002**



# Fishing for answers

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-mation when it comes to doing collaborative research. Instead he says the information from his research should be shared with as many people as possible. "Everything we're doing out there is being funded by the federal government," he says. "That's why I believe in being accountable for everything. There should be no secrets."

For all of his seriousness about collaborative research, Lee also has a well-developed sense of humor, which is best demonstrated by his strong Yankee heritage and his passion of videotape production. For instance, at the end of his baited underwater video, Lee narrates a story about Billy "The Bully" Lobster. During the short segment, shot entirely on location underwater in Ipswich Bay, viewers are treated to images of a lobster that tends to "bully" some nearby crabs. The crabs exact their revenge by tricking Billy and luring him into a nearby lobster trap by telling him "there's plenty of food over there."

Lee's colleagues and friends describe him as friendly, outgoing and a modern-day Renaissance man; someone who can tackle a myriad of complicated task with relative ease and enthusiasm. "He has to be one of the most dynamic and fascinating guys I know," Meredith said.

In 1996, Lee was given a Public Service Commendation from the U.S.



**WHAT ARE YOU LOOKING AT?** — A cod fish is caught on videotape by Bill Lee and Allan Michael during their bycatch reduction research project for the Northeast Consortium. (Photo courtesy of Bill Lee)

Coast Guard for his role in the rescue of Harbor Pilot Capt. Bill Chambers of Gloucester, who had fallen from a ladder and into the ocean in the pre-dawn hours of Jan. 21, 1996. Lee was commended for his quick thinking and response while working as the operator of the pilot boat that was dispatched to retrieve Capt. Chambers from the Danish M/V Fresca. "You do the things you need to do when you need to do them," Lee says of the incident.

Today, Lee is excited about some upcoming projects he is planning. In just a few weeks, a marine biologist from New Zealand will be visiting the Gloucester area to discuss conducting a research project similar to the one Lee and Michael recently completed for the Northeast Consortium.

"I think it's pretty exciting that someone from New Zealand can recognize the benefits of what we're trying to do right here in New England," Lee said.

Additionally, Lee has placed an advertisement in local trade publications, seeking the assistance of other New England fishermen. He wants to work more on studying fish behavior and designing bycatch reduction techniques that rely primarily on videotape rather than traditional net studies. "Why kill the fish in order to figure out how not to kill the fish?" he says.

"Sometimes I think I'm just a dumb fisherman," Lee says. "but if someone like me can do this kind of stuff, there's no reason that other guys can't get involved, too."

**Note:** For more information about obtaining one of Lee's videos or one of his planned collaborative research projects, you may visit his website at [www.oceanreporter.com](http://www.oceanreporter.com) or call 978-546-2748.

