RISAA Members'

Fishing Stories

Mom

story by Dale Hartman

My mom was quite a character in anything she ever did, whether it was shooting herself in the butt while shooting rats, or getting picked up in Las Vegas, Nevada as a "Lady of the Evening" or getting picked up by a wave on Block Island and fracturing her arm. Her salt water fishing was no different.

We started coming to Rhode Island in June of 1964 after having a private detective try to find my uncle so that he and his brother (my grandfather) could patch things up after years of not speaking to each other. We found my uncle three days after my grandfather died. Too bad. Life is too short to hold a grudge.

Anyway, my uncle, not unlike my grandfather, taught my mother and I how to salt water fish. Mom and I knew how to freshwater fish, but had no clue on salt water fishing.

One day we went to Jamestown, and while fishing off my uncle's favorite dock, my mother leaned over the side, amazed at all the jelly fish in the water, and fell off the dock into the center of the jellyfish. She was lucky not to be stung, but came to the surface with a jellyfish on her head and one down the front of her shirt. We laughed hard as we helped her out of the water, and decided to head back to Gaspee Point so she could get dry clothes.

After she changed, we set off for another spot my uncle liked to fish near Goddard Park. After trying our hand mom latched onto something that took her right off the dock again. She saved the rod, but lost the fish. At that point my uncle had enough for the day and we went home.

My uncle told me that he was afraid to bring mom on his boat until she got better at staying dry on the docks, but the next day he thought he would try her out on the boat.

Dale's mom showing off one of her smaller catches

He must have had a premonition becuase he outfitter her with waders, and off we went from Point Judith at 6:00 a.m. Everything was nice and smooth. At about 1:00 p.m. a light wind came up and at that point we had drifted out into the ocean.

Uncle latched onto a nice striper, and he told mom not to go near the edge, and for me to help him. We got the fish aboard when mom's pole hit. Uncle sat her in the chair and strapped her in until she landed a nice striper too.

Then the winds picked up, and we headed back to the Bay. Just north of the Jamestown Bridge we put some lines out to troll. Two lines hit. Uncle grabbed one pole and mom grabbed the other, and while we had our backs turned we heard a splash!

Uncle grabbed the gaff and latched on to mom's wader straps and pulled her into the boat, all the while she was still hanging onto the pole and fish. After getting her aboard, uncle put her back in the chair and strapped her in until she landed her striper, which was the biggest one of the day.

After getting home we told her to go back to freshwater fishing. At least that way she would not get eaten by a shark.

She never got to salt water fish again, but for years we told the stories at parties and all had a good laugh. She passed away last March, 2007.

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