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From the EDITOR

A WRACK LINE TO LOCAL SEAFOOD

Clamshells, fish bones and a mangled water bottle lie near a ribbon of kelp. On either side sprawl driftwood, eelgrass shards and stones tumbled smooth by the surf.

That's the close-up view from one of the many wrack lines I noticed in my search of beaches this spring. Looking up, I scanned the beach to see the wrack line snaking along the entire shore, marking where the last high tide met the sand.

Wrack lines – always changing, capturing bits of nature alongside the garbage of human civilization – really are a fitting metaphor for what this magazine is about. They move as sea level rises. Storm surges leave buoys, broken boards and discarded tires atop the small remnants of marine life that usually make up most of the wrack line. These bands of shells, rockweed, bits of hay stalks and all sorts of parts and pieces attract shorebirds searching for tiny crustaceans trapped in the tangle when the tide recedes. Wrack lines teach us about the waters and the land, and how they are intertwined.

In the last issue, my first as editor, I shared that I was forming a focus group to hear ideas about taking this magazine to the next level. On March 2 a group of 13 people of diverse ages and backgrounds came to Avery Point and offered a wealth of great insights and suggestions, several of which are already being implemented. One of the subjects we talked about was whether to keep the name.

Some thought “Wreck Lines” sparked curiosity even in people unfamiliar with the term, while others thought it was too obscure to appeal to general readers. After some good discussion, we came to a consensus to keep the name – at least for the present – but explain it more thoroughly in print and with photographs. The newly designed masthead now has the name superimposed over a wrack line at Ocean Beach Park in New London, with a flock of brant swimming just offshore. The wrack line on this page is from Griswold Point in Old Lyme, where the Connecticut River meets Long Island Sound.

For this issue, a select segment of the hodgepodge found in wrack lines on the Connecticut coast is the focus. Specifically, that's the evidence of all the edibles our local waters provide. From newly abundant species like black sea bass and porgy to the oysters and clams that have been staples for centuries to kelp – an emerging market for aquaculture farmers – the Sound and offshore seas offer a variety of delicious and nutritious fare. With consumer interest in locally sourced foods growing, many involved with the seafood industry see an opportunity to better promote and educate people about Connecticut seafood. The articles in this issue – including a great selection of recipes in print and on the Connecticut Sea Grant website, www.seagrant.uconn.edu – will be, I hope, a valuable contribution to that effort.

After you read this issue, check out the nearest wrack line and pay a visit to your neighborhood fish market or seafood restaurant for some local fish and shellfish. Stay connected to the sea.



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On the cover: Stuffed flounder made with fillets from Connecticut fishermen are among the local seafood offerings for sale at Flanders Fish Market in East Lyme. Photo: Judy Benson

