

A VISIT WITH...

## Old Ray, a lobsterman with tales from Corea

He was only in his 60s when I first met him, but his hands were already showing the ravages of hauling up his catch from the sea.

Old Ray, they call him now. More accurately, he is Ray Junior in three generations of Corea lobstermen named Ray Dunbar.

Ray Senior drowned at sea many years ago, victim of a rogue wave that drove his small boat against a ledge just outside Corea Harbor. He had been standing high and unprotected, watch-

ing the sea roll in toward land.

The youngest Ray, who can't seem to shirk the family nickname RayRay, has a larger and more powerful boat than the men for whom he was named. He catches far more lobsters each year than his father and grandfather could ever imagine.

There are other generations, too. Old Ray's grandfather was a lobsterman starting back in the 1880s, and his second son, Greg, also fishes. Three of his grandchildren, the youngest just 12, continue the tradition when school is out for the warm summer months.

Old Ray has seen lobster fishing change dramatically over the decades. He has watched boats going out of the

harbor evolve from peapods and sailing sloops into sleek fiberglass craft guided by satellites. He has seen the number of traps per person balloon from about a hundred up to a thousand, and then retract a bit with changes in the law.

Nearly 90, he gave up fishing when he was well into his 80s, and his independence is swiftly waning due to advancing age and the loss of sight in his left eye.

"My body just wouldn't let me go any more," he said, wiping a drop of moisture from his bad eye. "Lobster fishing is a labor of love. If you like it, it's good. If you don't, it's no place to be."

— Beth Parks

BETH PARKS PHOTO

Retired lobsterman Ray Dunbar spends most days beside his window overlooking Corea Harbor.

