

## *Patricia (Kehoe) Pendell does commercial fishing in Alaska Waters*

**By: LaRAYNE WATTS**

Patricia Kehoe was born in 1953 to long-time harbor residents Jack and Jean Kehoe. Her family moved from South Bend to Raymond in 1955. Her mother still lives in the same house.

Pat attended Riverview Elementary. When she was old enough to go to junior high school, "I gloried in being old enough to ride the bus downtown for sixth grade," she said.

She graduated from Raymond High School in 1971. She says, "I graduated with approximately 75 other students, most of whom I had known all through grade school. As I look back, that closeness was one of the great attributes of school in Raymond."

She remembers some of her teachers fondly. She says, "Mr. Bacon stands out as one of the teachers who encouraged our interest in learning. In those days I wasn't particularly fond of school, so it probably took a pretty determined teacher to overcome my instinct for doing the minimum amount of work necessary. Mr. Berry was one teacher whose devotion to his subject was exemplary, and Mr. Warnstadt quietly nudged us onward in our study of English. Mr. Anderson, our principal, managed to strike complete terror into the heart of anyone unlucky or foolish enough to be caught in the vicinity of wrongdoing, all the while letting us know that he truly believed in us."

Pat also remembers the building. She said, "One of the highlights of my education in Raymond was our beautiful, rich, dark auditorium. You walked up on that stage, the deep maroon curtains slowly back, and you could have been in New York or London."

After graduating from RHS Pat attended Western Washington State College for three years, majoring in art. She said, "Finally the realization forced its way through that I better be able to make a living somehow." She transferred to Tacoma General Hospital School of Nursing, graduating in 1977 as a Registered Nurse.

She started her nursing career at St. Peter's hospital in Olympia in a then- brand new neurology unit, where she worked with Karen Brown, another 1971 RHS graduate. Pat earned her certification as a Neuroscience RN during this period of time.

After that Pat recalls, "An itch to travel led me to resign and go exploring in Alaska. I moved to Sitka and worked initially in the Alaska Pioneer's Home where I met wonderful old-time Alaskans who had settled southeastern Alaska. They told me their tales of whaling ships, rowing dories in search of halibut, and searching for gold. I soon left the Pioneer Home to follow albeit more tamely in their footsteps. I got a job as a cook/deckhand on a blackcod longliner and then fished halibut across the gulf of Alaska. There I found myself, the same girl who shirked PE every possible chance, up to my knees in fish, helping to gaff three hundred pound halibut over the rail of a 56 foot boat. Sometimes our only companions for days were albatross, whales and faint voices over the radio. I learned a lot about self-reliance and about working as part of a team."

Pat combined fishing in the summers with working as a RN in the winters until after she married Howard Pendell in 1985. She said, "We spent our summers salmon trolling with his beautiful old wooden troller through the waters of SE Alaska, but spent winters traveling." According to Pat they have been to Mexico, Guatemala, Honduras, Belize, Costa Rica, Greece, Turkey, The former Yugoslavia, Russia, Georgia, Estonia, England, Ireland, and Wales.

The couple has two daughters, Coral was born in 1987 and Katy in 1991. Pat says, "They were raised on the boat, pitching into whatever jobs they were capable of doing at the time. They traveled with us in earlier days, but now their schedules keep us closer to home. We built our own home on an island outside of Sitka, hauling each piece of wood across the water by skiff. We commute back and forth to town by skiff, which sometimes makes me feel I've taken on the concept of the chauffeuring mom just past the limit."

With the girls more grown up now, Pat has begun working as a Guardian Ad Litem through the system. That job involves investigating and representing adults court proceedings or when the court is involved in determining their wellbeing. She says that her family continues to spend summers commercial fishing, but have increasingly become involved in fishing politics and markings as the fishing industry changes.

Pat says, "My daughters and I were busy with dance and music, plays and art, and we drag Howard along with us fairly willingly. Through all our adventures, I always have a sketchbook and paints with me to record surroundings. I paint and take painting workshops as often as possible."

When asked about her advice to this year's seniors, Pat said, "I'm hesitant to dispense advice to today's students because in my experience the students of today are vastly more focused than we ever dreamed of being. But if I must say just believe in yourself and believe in your dreams. If the safe route doesn't get you where you want to be, try a different path, don't give up and don't forget to enjoy the journey. Sometimes it's more important than the destination."



RHS Alumnus Patricia (Kehoe) Pendell, 1971