

Day Tripping: Quarry Park and plenty of paninis

APRIL 2016

# HALF MOON BAY

## A NEW VIEW

OPEN SPACE NEAR  
SKYLINE PROVIDES  
SWEEPING VISTAS

AGAINST THE TIDE

# Making IT WORK

FISHERMAN CREATES HAPPINESS  
BY KEEPING IT SIMPLE

Q&A

**EDDIE ANDREINI JR.**  
SHARES HIS PASSION  
FOR THE SKIES





BLOOM ZEROES IN  
ON A PRODUCTIVE LIFE

# MAKING HIS OWN WAY

*Photos and story by Cat Cutillo*

**D**avid Bloom has spent so much time in Pillar Point Harbor over the past 38 years that he can no longer hear the steady pulse of the foghorn blowing. It's become as rhythmic and forgettable as his own beating heart as he unties his boat and pushes out to sea.

Standing 6-foot-2, Bloom towers over his tiny 10-foot-long fishing boat. It's an abandoned rowboat he converted with his bare hands using some unlikely found materials to create a vessel fit for a lucrative fishing business. The exterior is made from street signs, the seat is from a sports car headrest and the fuel tanks are made out of fire extinguishers.

"Fire extinguishers are made of the very best



**Against the Tide**



*Bloom on the dock of  
Pillar Point Harbor.*









*Left, David Bloom gives away fish to a thankful kayaker on a Sunday afternoon at Pillar Point Harbor. Above, Bloom takes his custom made boat out into the harbor, made, in part, by old street signs.*

metal. They don't mess around in schools and hospitals," says Bloom.

Bloom first launched the boat, which he named "Zero," in 2000 after six months of building it in his spare time.

"When I made this boat, the truth is I didn't need it. I had an even tougher boat that could go through breaking waves," says Bloom. "I had a compulsion to make it. I could not stop myself.

"It was complete thinking," says Bloom. "I figured I'd find out why later."

He finally traced his driving force back to the Christmas when he was 2 1/2 years old and had received a cardboard toy airplane called a Blackhawk. It had a steering stick.

"This here is my Christmas present to me," he says. "After I made it, I discovered that."

In fact, Zero has been the gift that keeps on giving. Bloom says he only has to work about seven hours per week

to make a good profit because the boat itself only costs about \$5,000 per year to maintain and only uses three gallons of gas per outing.

"People constantly tell me it's the most productive ship in the harbor. I catch the most in the least amount of time," he says.

Alaskan fisherman and boat builder Chris Pedersen met Bloom two years ago and says he was so impressed with Bloom's boat that he is currently replicating one for himself.

"That's where I started as a little boy in a little tiny rowboat selling perch in my family's boatyard," Pedersen says. "Now I'm downsized. Dave's way ahead of the curve. He has no crew, no responsibility of making somebody else a living, and (he's) fishing to enjoy life.

"(It's) unbelievable the intelligence of this man for surviving in a world that is killing every (other) fisherman," Pedersen says.

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DAVID BLOOM, FISHERMAN





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*David bloom bags his catch for customer on a recent Sunday morning.*

And although Zero might stem from the imagination of a child, the boat's technical execution is clearly from the mind of an engineer.

Bloom used old engine parts, including an outboard motor, and he made steering and throttle in one piece. He has a flip up and down fish-finder transducer, and he says there are at least 17 large holes to strategically drain water.

"Twice last year I put the back end of the boat under water. Its not a problem," says Bloom. "If the helm's full of water, you just take off and everything will drain by gravity."

He even installed PVC piping to run multiple hook lines and reverse them while baiting and taking off fish. He says he's run as many as 40 hooks at one time and up to a mile and a half of continuous fishing line.

"He comes back with a nice load of fish. People are lined up on the dock. They're ecstatic. They're as fresh as the fish you could get out of the aquarium on Dave's boat," says

Pedersen.

"Plus I get to eat fish 500 meals a year for free," says Bloom who now fishes for rock cod.

Throughout the 1990s. Bloom fished commercially for monkeyface eels. In fact, in a 1998 Half Moon Bay Review article, Editor Marc DesJardins wrote that Bloom had, "More success fishing for monkeyface eels than perhaps anyone in the country."

By the time Bloom had launched his boat, Zero, in 2000, he had ceased fishing for monkeyface eels, but he is still known around Pillar Point Harbor as "Eel Man." He is also known around the Harbor for his passion for belly dancing, which he says he pursued for the exercise.

"Dancing develops your posture in every way," says Bloom. "People's conception of manhood is totally off base. I'm 64 years old and feeling my age a little, but I'm still real limber. Believe it or not I've got a six-pack from belly dancing."

Bloom lives in Princeton alongside two



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*Bloom loves the solitude of fishing by himself. Inset, Bloom carved the name that many call him at the harbor — "Eel Man."*

feral cats that are now 15 and 16 years old, respectively. He draws his philosophy from everything he sees.

"The way I've always raised the most outstanding, ruling cats in my area of Princeton is you give them total freedom. Let them do what they want and let them push you around even as long as they win their next fight and belong to themselves fully. That's all that matters," says Bloom. "You just give absolute freedom."

And Bloom seems to have nine lives himself.

"I already lived three to seven lifetimes. When I was 26 years old I spent so much time running around the densest forest that I could find. I risked my life a million times doing everything super macho. At one point the day started lasting forever just like when I was a child. I had no distractions and time almost stopped. You don't know how, deceiving things are in the world. The pitfalls and traps," he says. "It's all those distractions that keep you from being yourself."

He says he loves the solitude of fishing.

"I named the boat 'Zero' so I would not have to defend anything

about it and could be free."

Zero, a number that is both void of value and full of possibility. It embodies silence, the moment before we start counting, and a chance to start over again. It is both the beginning and the end.

And perhaps there is a point where everything comes full circle.

Recently, Pedersen came across Bloom doing something different to his boat. In the white noise of the foghorn, Bloom likely heard silence as Pedersen watched him painting a new symbol onto his boat. It was the Chinese symbol for the word, "Zero."

"He finally got to name his boat in Chinese," says Pedersen. "When he was painting that on there he looked like a little boy opening a Christmas present."

"I'm a grade-A weirdo," laughs Bloom "But there's one worse thing than being weird. That's being normal." HALF MOON BAY

