



UNITED FISHERMEN OF ALASKA

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Cook Inlet Fisherman Jess Russell, 13, selected as UFA 2004 Fisherman of the Year

United Fishermen of Alaska (UFA) has selected thirteen year old Jess Russell of Clam Gulch as its first annual Fisherman of the Year. The UFA Board congratulated Jess for his outstanding actions and the sound basis of preparedness that enabled him to make the vital difference in a life and death fishing mishap on the family boat in Cook Inlet this summer.

In a story reported in Kenai Peninsula Clarion on August 1, 2004, Jess was able to calmly and effectively apply his knowledge of first aid, radio and instrument use, and the workings of his family fishing boat to save the life of his father, Ron Russell. Jess went on that long day to deliver the day's catch after Ron had been removed from the boat to the hospital.

While gillnet fishing in Cook Inlet, the net got caught in the outrigger. Ron Russell opened the hatch and began working on the tangled line and lost consciousness due to carbon monoxide, also suffering a bloody cut on the head. Jess radioed for help, was able to use the boats instruments and calmly relay their position to Coast Guard and nearby fishermen. Jess then pulled his father from the hold and performed first aid. Nearby fishermen arrived to help, but Jess was the only one on the boat that knew first aid.

With his dad coming back to consciousness and removed from the boat to the hospital, Jess continued to work with the help of other fishermen to untangle and pick the fish from the net, return to the Kasilof dock, and unload the catch, and then learned that his father would be OK.

Ron Russell is justifiably proud of his son Jess, and credits his ability and performance under pressure to the excellent preparation that Jess learned through gaining his Boy Scouts first aid merit badge with Dr. Nels Anderson. Jess also thanks all the nearby fishermen who came to their aid.

"In honoring Jess Russell, UFA looks to highlight not only the heroic effort that took place on

MEMBER ORGANIZATIONS

Alaska Crab Coalition • Alaska Druggers Association • Alaska Longline Fishermen's Association • Armstrong Keta • At-sea Processors Association
Bristol Bay Reserve • Concerned Area "M" Fishermen • Cordova District Fishermen United • Douglas Island Pink and Chum
Fishing Vessel Owners Association Groundfish Forum • Kenai Peninsula Fishermen's Association • Kodiak Regional Aquaculture Association
Kodiak Seiners Association • North Pacific Fisheries Association • North Pacific Scallop Cooperative
Northern Southeast Regional Aquaculture Association • Old Harbor Fishermen's Association • Petersburg Vessel Owners Association
Prince William Sound Aquaculture Corporation • Purse Seine Vessel Owner Association • Seafood Producers Cooperative
Southeast Alaska Herring Seiners Marketing Association • Southeast Alaska Regional Dive Fisheries Association
Southeast Alaska Seiners Association • Southern Southeast Regional Aquaculture Association • United Catcher Boats • United Salmon Association
United Southeast Alaska Gillnetters • Valdez Fisheries Development Association • Western Gulf of Alaska Fishermen

that critical day, but the preparation and skills Jess had acquired beforehand. The fact that Jess was prepared for what he needed to do to save his fathers life is a noteworthy foundation of this achievement," said UFA Executive Director Mark Vinsel.

Russell joins UFA 2004 honorees Governor Frank Murkowski, UFA Man of the Year in Alaska Politics, and Departing commissioner Kevin Duffy, UFA Executive Man of the Year. United Fishermen of Alaska is a statewide organization representing 32 Alaska commercial fishing groups as well as individual fishermen and fishing related businesses.

For the full story see Peninsula Clarion of August 1, 2004 -
http://peninsulaclarion.com/stories/080104/new_080104new001001.shtml

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