

National Fisherman's 2003 HIGHLINERS

Many of us who came of age in coastal communities can recall a time when the world seemed grateful for the provisions of its commercial fishermen.

Today, however, the fishing industry is often held under a microscope with lenses fogged by misinformation and ideology.

When it came time to select this year's Highliners — individuals whose commitment to catching fish is matched by their commitment to their community — we decided to seek individuals whose thoughts, words and deeds have advanced the cause of their fellow fishermen.

Here they are.

F/V Kamilar
and F/V Mitkof
Petersburg, Alaska



ARNE FUGLVOG
On the go



COURTESY ARNE AND CINDY FUGLVOG

ASKED whether he wanted to fish or pursue politics, Arne Fuglvog said "both." He has two boats as well.

away last year.

Fuglvog says he can point out innumerable fishermen that seem more worthy of recognition. "There are so many guys better at fishing in this town, and so many that would be more effective in the political process," he says.

Others, however, would disagree and are quick to expound upon his merits as a team player. "He inspires people to do their best and brings out the best in folks around him," says Linda Behnken, a past member of the North

Pacific council and executive director of the Alaska Longline Fisherman's Association, in Sitka.

That Fuglvog would enter the life of commercial fishing seems only natural in a town that wears the motto: "In Petersburg, commercial fishermen aren't made, they're born."

Fuglvog started longlining halibut in an open skiff with his grandfather when he was 10; he began running his dad's longliner, the Kamilar, when he was 26, and he bought the 80-foot Mitkof 10 years ago. These days he tenders groundfish, salmon and herring, fishes crab and longlines for halibut and blackcod.

As for his political involvement, however, Fuglvog's decision was largely a matter of choice — even though he had been warned that committing to the dual roles of fishing and fisheries advocacy could wear him a little thin.

"My dad said it would come down to, 'Do you want to be a politician, or do you

want to be a fisherman?'"

"I said, 'I want to do both.'"

What followed that conversation, back in mid-1990s, would become a litany of appointments to boards, committees and other fisheries-affiliated positions. He became president of the Petersburg Vessel Owners, a board member of United Fisherman of Alaska. He has served on the advisory panel to the council, the IFQ Implementation Team and on halibut charter and subsistence committees. More recently, Fuglvog has been appointed as member of the North Pacific Council, an alternate to the North Pacific Anadromous Fisheries Commission and the halibut commission's research advisory board.

True to his father's predictions, Fuglvog finds himself jumping from oilskins to suit and tie and vice versa and keeping a schedule that the rest of us would find daunting. And for every weeklong meeting, there are even more days of preparatory reading.

"It's hard to be a successful fisherman and keep up with everything going on at the meetings," he says. "I'm reading all the way to and from the fishing grounds; then I try to fish and end up racing off to another meeting."

What keeps Arne Fuglvog racing the calendar is his belief that he can make a difference; in particular, that it is his turn to take the helm and to steer the industry and scientific and legal communities toward positive changes in fisheries management.

With that he's quick to expound on the plea-

tures — and the hurdles. "I really like the people," he says of the parties comprising various fisheries panels and agencies. "That's largely what's kept me in the process."

Waxing his optimism about the process has been Fuglvog's discovery that the scientific and fishing communities associated with most North Pacific fisheries have become open to the scrutiny of crucial data. And the fact that the scientific community has been willing to open its eyes and ears to input from the fishermen has built in a strengthening sense of trust from the side of the industry, he says.

"A positive relationship has been cultivated," says Fuglvog. "I really have to give them" — fisheries scientists — "a lot of the credit."

The hurdles? "The political process is, for the most part, open, deliberative and accessible to the public, but very cumbersome," Fuglvog says. "In the past 10 years that I've been involved, I've seen a distinct change from management in the council arena to one that includes teams of lawyers, the courts and Congress. You can have the greatest ideas — even getting them through the process without

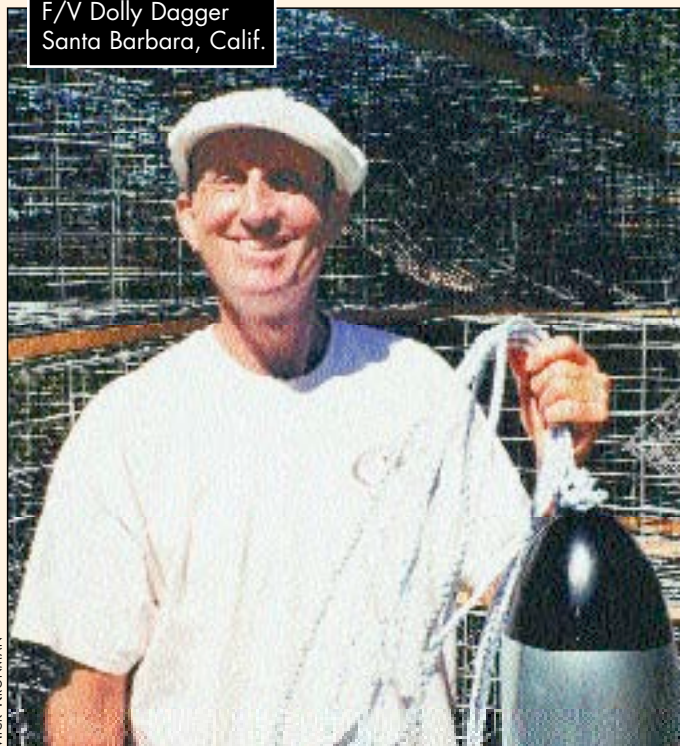
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COURTESY ARNE AND CINDY FUGLVOG

FUGLVOG PROGRESSED from skiff fishing to the Kamilar and now also owns the tender and longliner Mitkof.

F/V Dolly Dagger
Santa Barbara, Calif.



CHRIS MILLER In the arena

By Mick Kronman

Santa Barbara's Chris Miller honed his skills and toughened his spirit in the 1970s and 1980s crewing for legendary lobsterman Gene Hall — a freewheeling Californian who lived hard, fished harder and spat in the eye of dan-

men co-manage any Malibu reserves. Ultimately, California Gov. Pete Wilson vetoed the move, for lack of funding.

What turned Miller into a committed fisheries activist, however, was the closure of the abalone fishery in 1996, which he witnessed while working to

ger or threat — but his political will lay dormant until 1992, when he bought his first trap boat.

“That’s when I realized I had a stake in the fishery’s future and if I didn’t get involved, I had a lot to lose,” recalls Miller, at 47 an advocate who’s recognized among fishermen, scientists and regulators alike.

Miller cut his political teeth in the mid-1990s, when residents of Malibu tried to establish a marine reserve in their local waters, a move Miller likens to “setting up a private park with absolutely no science to back it up.” He and a small band of trappers lobbied to have the effort downsized and to have fisher-

men co-manage any Malibu reserves. Ultimately, California Gov. Pete Wilson vetoed the move, for lack of funding.

“I was at the state capitol on my own stuff and I watched it go down like some mythic tragedy,” he recalls. “The divers went to the legislature to reign in abalone poaching, and the next thing you know, they had their fishery shut down. That’s when I decided we had no choice but to be proactive fishermen.

Though not likely to shrink from a legitimate political fight, Miller says that even proactive involvement (his successful participation in promoting limited entry for lobster trapping, for instance) carries risks. “It’s a fifty-fifty proposition,” he says. “Half the time you’ll be saluted for getting ahead of the curve, promoting sustainability. The other half, you’ll be accused of defensively protecting poorly managed fisheries. Bottom line: It’s tricky to cast light on your fishery and not get torn to shreds in the process.”

But risk hasn’t stopped Miller, who more than rose to the occasion during development of marine reserves at Channel Islands off the south-central California coast. Implemented in April, the plan set aside 25 percent of state waters as no-fishing reserves. It took four years to evolve, and Miller participated throughout, representing fishermen on advisory groups, in public meetings and on the

docks. He even drafted and presented “The Proactive Fishermen’s Plan,” a well-researched, modest alternative to the 25 percent plan, one that included detailed maps and supporting evidence.

Overall, Miller’s commitment cost



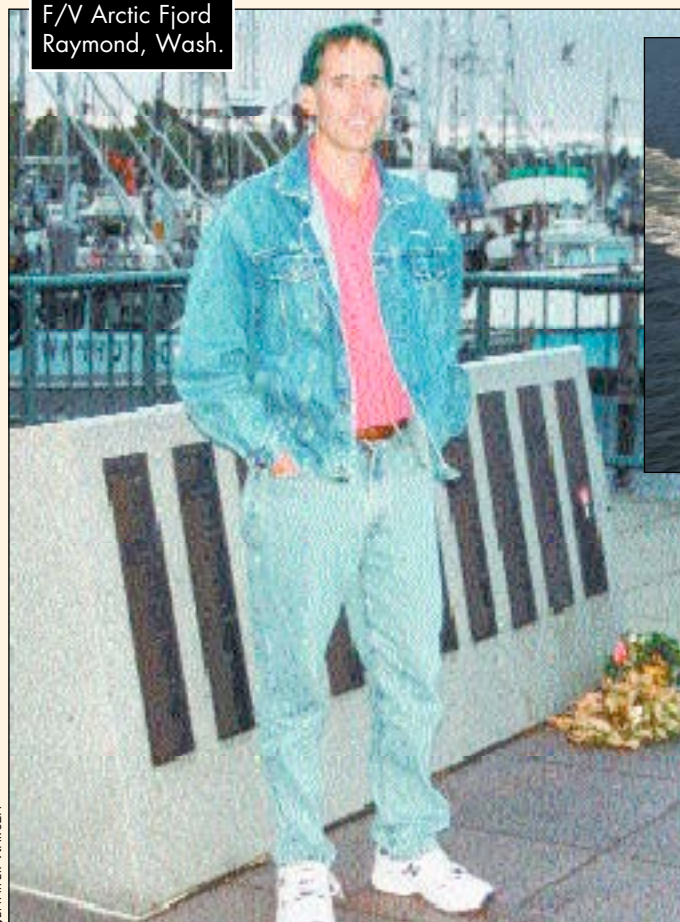
A DECKHAND for years, Miller realized he had a stake in the future when he bought a boat.

him the equivalent of two months’ fishing time per year, he says. Free labor, he calls it, to “keep his finger in the dike and make sure marine reserves didn’t destroy our fisheries and fishing culture.”

In the end, however, politics prevailed, says Chris, claiming he’s neither daunted nor embittered by the outcome (though he admits to having felt like a nervous wreck at times). He remains, however, can-

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F/V Arctic Fjord
Raymond, Wash.



DAN HANSON Team player

By Jennifer Karuza

A lot of things can be said about third-generation fisherman Dan Hanson.

It can be said, for instance, that Han-

son, captain of the Arctic Fjord, a Bering Sea pollock catcher-processor, is a staunch supporter of his fishery. And it can be said that Hanson is dedicated to working with the Bering Sea crab fleet to avoid gear conflicts. It can also be said that Hanson’s presentations before the North Pacific Fisheries Management Council at the height of the stellar

sea lion controversy helped preserve his fishery. One thing that cannot be said, however, is that Hanson is a man with an inflated ego.



BIG BOATS present big targets, but Hanson’s efforts speak very well for the North Pacific catcher-processor fleet.

“I don’t want to come off as some type of hero,” says Hanson, who is 50. “There are 15 fishermen left in the pollock factory trawler business. It’s a really good group, and no one guy is any better than the other.”

Hanson’s mild demeanor becomes fiery passion when discussing his fellow catcher-processor fisher-

men, especially the effort they have made to keep the pollock fishery clean.

“Bycatch is a very serious issue to us,” he says. “We work very close together and share information. We’ve worked hard because we’ve gotten so much bad press, especially in the early years.

“But the main reason we fish clean is because it’s a clean fishery,” he continues. “And we’re lucky that the fishing is good enough where if we do run into a problem, we can move and still catch fish somewhere else.”

Although Hanson lives in Raymond, Wash., he is originally from Ballard. He is the grandson of Barney Hanson, a halibut longliner, and the son of Bernard (Bernie) Hanson, a pioneer in the trawl fishery who helped design some of the bottom nets that are still in use today. Both were highline fishermen in their own right.

“I was just born into fishing. It was just

a family deal. You went fishing and that’s the way it was,” he says with a chuckle.

Hanson’s younger brother, Bud, is a pollock fisherman who works out of Dutch Harbor. His older brother, Tom, owned and operated the Mary Lou, a 90-foot stern trawler. One disastrous Sunday in January 1984, Tom was lost at sea while making his way across the Gulf of Alaska. Two years ago, Hanson was asked to be on the board of directors for Seattle’s Fishermen’s Memorial.

“It’s a big honor to be asked,” he says. “It’s the thing I’m most proud of.” Hanson’s niece, Jessica Hanson MacDaniel, was the first child of a lost-at-sea parent to receive money from the memorial’s scholarship fund and graduate from college.

The Arctic Storm Management Group owns the 270-foot Arctic Fjord, which Hanson has run since 1996, and the 340-foot Arctic Storm, which Hanson operated from 1989 until 1996. Donna Parker, who is director of governmental affairs for the company, has asked Hanson to address the North Pacific Fisheries Management Council on several issues, including the complex stellar sea lion restrictions.

“Dan is very knowledgeable about these issues,” says Parker. “He is articulate and he brings the credibility only a fisherman can.”

Although Hanson is dismissive about what part he played in the council’s decision not to impose the “170 line,” a boundary that likely would have reduced the size of the Bering Sea fishing grounds by at least

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controversy — and it can take years to get them onto the books. It can be very frustrating.”

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did about what it taught him.

“For the research community, it was pork barrel politics at its best,” he says. “Advocacy scientists become stakeholders in ivory tower construction, rather than helping sustain fisheries. The result was a process in which created apartheid for fishermen, and their ecological knowledge was viewed as unsophisticated and competing with the scientists.”

And Miller let them know it. Working through an extensive e-mail network, he became more than a little verbal about what he saw as

Hanson, continued from page 23
30 percent, Parker firmly believes Hanson’s passion and ability to communicate played a significant role.

Another issue of importance to Hanson is the mending of fences with the Bering Sea crab fleet with regard to gear conflict. Hanson joined forces with Walter Christensen, a Bering Sea crab fisherman and childhood friend, to encourage an end to the longstanding resentment between the two groups. The

As for challenges in the years ahead, Fuglvog believes that comprehensive rationalization of overcapitalized fisheries will be nothing short of paramount.

a bait-and-switch maneuver by pro-preservation researchers and government agencies.

“When the process first began,” he reminds, “the Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary was asked to facilitate a fair resolution. They were supposed to be neutral. Ultimately, they teamed up with pro-reserve scientists and staunch environmental groups to form a ‘super stakeholder’ coalition that swayed public opinion and drove the outcome.”

Still looking forward and remaining positive, Chris says there’s much work left to be done on marine reserves. “The big challenge now is to make sure reserves are used as tools for fisheries

men have helped implement a system in which crab fishermen send their location information via the Internet to a man in Seattle, who then sends it back to the trawlers.

“So, if we’re on the grounds at the same time, we work really hard to stay out of their gear and to know where their gear is,” explains Hanson. “It’s a good system and it’s working well. It’s like ‘Hey, wait a minute, we’re not all bad. We can make this work.’ It took years and years to get back on their good side.”

Minimizing the impacts of fishing upon the ecosystem, he predicts, will be another challenge.

And when those goals have been

stock assessments, so legitimate science can again be injected into the process. Without it, we’ve wasted a whole bunch of time.”

Chris feels equipped to assist the effort, noting that what he’s learned about habitat mapping, ecological monitoring and biological survey methods has enhanced his skills and has allowed him to communicate with scientists around the world about fisheries issues — including reserves. “Instead of wasting time with scientists who don’t want to work with us, I’ve shifted my focus to those who do,” he explains.

Meanwhile, Chris beams with pride when asked how his fellow fishermen —

achieved, Fuglvog will be able to go back to reading for the pleasure of it, and spend a little more time savoring his days at sea. **NF**

folks he’s represented and to whom he’s had to explain both his motives and the details of a complex political process — have reacted to his efforts.

“At first,” he explains, “a lot of guys went into a Darwinian mode — the old, ‘I’ll survive somehow, no matter what they do.’” Now, he says, his fellow fishermen have heard the wake-up call.

“They realize that with implementation of marine reserves, they’re going to have to do a better job than ever helping manage their own fisheries, since there they got a lot less room to work with. In a sense, it’s turned us all into fisheries activists.” **NF**

Pollock is by far not the only fishery Hanson has experience with, but it’s clearly where his greatest enthusiasm lies. He has faxed a rebuttal letter from his wheelhouse in the Bering Sea to a national magazine that printed a grossly inaccurate and disparaging article on his fishery. He challenges environmental groups on the misinformation they present to the public.

“Mostly what I’ve done is try to convince them they’ve been wrong about the stocks,” says Hanson. “What they say and

believe is all completely the opposite of the truth. I’ve been the captain on a pollock boat for 20 years, and I have never seen as much fish as I’ve seen the past two or three years.”

You can call Hanson a lot of things. Dedicated. Passionate. Loyal to the industry and the men who fish in it. Humble.

“I don’t think that there is anyone much different than the next anymore,” he says, and pauses. “Nobody is better than anybody else,” he repeats. **NF**

A history of the National Fisherman’s Highliner Award

SEATTLE — The names of Arne Fuglvog, Dan Hanson and Chris Miller will be added Nov. 21 to an honor roll begun by *National Fishermen* in 1975.

Robert J. Browning, then a West Coast-based associate editor at *National Fishermen* and author of the classic, “Fisheries of the North Pacific,” wanted to recognize fishermen for overarching contributions to their industry and to their communities.

“All the credit goes to Bob Browning,” says David Jackson, a former publisher of *National Fishermen*. “It was his idea, and he arranged the first presentations at Fish Expo with our approval.”

The following year Fish Expo was held in Boston. Without Browning around to orchestrate it, the fledgling Highliner program fell through the cracks. But that wouldn’t happen again.

From 1977 on, three fishermen have been honored every year, with East Coast and Gulf of Mexico fishermen recognized in even-numbered years, when Fish Expo is held on the East Coast, and West Coast and North Pacific fishermen recognized in odd-numbered years, at Fish Expo in Seattle.

In addition, four individuals have received Lifetime Achievement Awards; Dayton Alverson in 1977, Clement V. Tillion in 1991, Angela Sanfilippo in 1994 and Gerry Studds in 1996. Also, in 1987, the entire complement of the U.S. Coast Guard’s Air Station Kodiak joined the club as recipients of a special award for heroic service to the fleets.

Until 1979, Highliners were chosen by the publisher, in consultation with the moderators of the Fish Expo seminars. Since then, however, the editors have named the Highliners after seeking nominations from fishermen’s associations, past Highliners and other fishermen. Readers are encouraged to suggest nominees.

National Fishermen presents each Highliner with a commemorative plaque, and Furuno USA has made a generous tradition of presenting each Highliner with a GPS.

Highliners receive their awards at a dinner held the Friday night of Fish Expo. The dinner is attended by past Highliners, family and friends and the editors and publisher of *National Fishermen*.

Highliners honored in past years:

- 1975 - Joe Easley, Spuds Johnson, Nels Otness
- 1977 - Oral Burch, Adolph Samuelson, Wayne Smith
- Special Award: Lifetime Achievement - Dr. Dayton L. Alverson*
- 1978 - Dan Arnold, John J. Ross, Larry Simms
- 1979 - Louis Agard Jr., Bart Eaton, Barry Fisher
- 1980 - Kenny Daniels, Joe Novello, Rick Savage
- 1981 - Gordon Jensen, Ralph Hazard, Konrad Uri
- 1982 - Richard Miller, William Sandefur Jr., Gabe Skaar
- 1983 - Dave Danborn, Bruce Gore, John Maher
- 1984 - Dick Allen, Paul Pence, James Salisbury
- 1985 - Oscar Dyson, Mike McCorkle, Rudy Peterson
- 1986 - Jake Dykstra, Richard McLellan, Bill Moore
- 1987 - Al Burch, Earl Carpenter, Einar Pedersen
- Special Award: U.S. Coast Guard Station Kodiak*
- 1988 - Frank Mirarchi, Sonny Morrison, Louis Puskas
- 1989 - Nat Bingham, Pete Knutsen, Francis Miller
- 1990 - Arnold Leo, Fred Mattera, Mark Taylor
- 1991 - Ron Hegge, Rick Steiner, Tony West
- Special Award: Lifetime Achievement - Clement V. Tillion*
- 1992 - David Cousens, Julius Collins, Jim McCauley
- 1993 - John Bruce, Snooks Moore, Jimmy Smith
- 1994 - Tim Adams, Nelson R. Beideman, Joseph Testaverde
- Special Award: Lifetime Achievement - Angela Sanfilippo*
- 1995 - Michael McHenry, Dennis Petersen, Gary Slaven
- 1996 - William Foster, Robert Smith, Diane Wilson
- Special Award: U.S. Rep. Gerry Studds*
- 1997 - Jim Bassett, Mark Lundsten, Pietro Parravano
- 1998 - Bill Amaru, Felix G. Cox, Gary Nichols
- 1999 - Wayne Moody, Jay Stinson, Ray Wadsworth
- 2000 - Scott Keefe, Patten D. White, Richard Neilsen Jr.
- 2001 - Ginny Goblirsch, Jamie Ross, Tim Thomas
- 2002 - George Barisich, Russell Dize, Luis Ribas