

The Officers, Directors and Members of
US SAILING
are pleased to present the
ARTHUR B. HANSON RESCUE MEDAL
to
The Rescuing Crew on Wharf Rat
For the rescue as follows:

A crew that rescued five people from Chesapeake Bay were awarded Arthur B. Hanson Rescue Medals by the US SAILING Safety-at-Sea Committee for the seamanship displayed by their crews.

On the night of July 17, 2010, Larry Vazzano (Mt. Airy, Md.) and his crew of three in the CS 40 Wharf Rat were powering home to Pasadena, Md., from the Solomons Island Invitational Regatta. Soon after passing under the Bay Bridge at 11:00 p.m., they heard screams for help and spotted a waving navigation light. Vazzano quickly throttled back and cautiously drove towards their light where they saw two men and a 12-year-old boy clinging to a capsized boat.

Vazzano initiated a Mayday, deployed the boat's Lifesling rescue device astern at the end of its line, and circled around the overturned 14-foot powerboat. The two men grabbed the line and were pulled to the boat, where they came aboard by climbing the stern boarding ladder.

Wharf Rat then retrieved the boy from the boat with a throw rope. He was the only one of the five wearing a life jacket. The incident was caused when a wave capsized their boat. The crew learned that others were still in the water, and they spotted a woman and a man clinging to a cooler. A rescue helicopter arrived overhead as a police boat from the Maryland Department of Natural Resources picked up the remaining two in the water and the three others on Wharf Rat.

After three hours in the water, they were treated for mild hypothermia and shock. Vazzano has attended several US SAILING Safety at Sea Seminars.

Dr. Gino Bottino, MD
Chairman, Safety at Sea Committee
By Direction

NOMINATION

What happened I was returning from the Solomons Regatta on Saturday night, 7/17. I had decided to return at night after the race ceremonies because of the extreme heat we had been having. I left Solomons with three of race crew around 1715h and began motoring north in a 15k southerly breeze. We crossed under the Chesapeake Bridge just before 2300 as we headed for Oak Harbor Marina in Pasadena where Wharf Rat is berthed, another 2-hours away. After 7-hours motoring conversation was light as we were headed towards Baltimore Lighthouse at the mouth of the Magothy R.

Just after 2300 we heard some screams, 'help, please help us.' I looked at crew members to verify what I heard and Kathleen saw a red and green portable bow light waving a few hundred feet away. I quickly throttled back and cautiously drove towards their light. We saw three people clinging to a capsized boat. We shouted we are going to help and they shouted back to us, 'please hurry.' I initiated a Mayday and handed the VHF to Brian to continue as I let out MOB life sling module and circled close around overturned boat. We kept shouting at them to keep communication.

Jose and Oscar were able to grab the line on our third pass and we slowly pulled them to stern of Wharf Rat where the lifelines were unclipped and ladder was lowered, Brian and Wesley brought them aboard. Circling again Oscar Samuel grabbed rescue line and again we slowly pulled him to boat's stern. He needed more help getting aboard. Once the third victim was aboard Jose said there were two others out there clinging to a cooler, including his brother. Only the 12 year old boy was wearing a life vest.

Above we saw the helicopter's search light hovering nearby and we relayed the information of two other victims still in the water clinging onto a cooler. We again began circling and shouting, Carlos! I did not have a good feeling about them and knew they were in the water 3+ hours. However, in about 20min we heard a shout back from Carlos and the NRP and AAF&R closed in spotting victims holding onto cooler in water and brought them aboard safely. AAF&R decided to take the three rescued from our boat and set off for the

Magothy R. and local hospital. All victims had mild hypothermia and two clinging to cooler also had symptoms of shock.

Motoring again on our way to marina it was quiet for the first half-hour, but when I broke the silence about the life experience we just had everyone talked about it until we were at dock.