

The Officers, Directors and Members of
US SAILING
are pleased to present the
ARTHUR B. HANSON RESCUE MEDAL
to the crew of

Ellen Parry Schmidt

for the rescue as follows:

On the way to the starting line at the W. D. Schock Memorial Regatta hosted by Newport Harbor Yacht Club on March 4, 2001, Ellen Parry Schmidt aboard the Santana 20 Purple Haze, called for a spinnaker practice on the way from the harbor entrance downwind one-mile to the starting area. The south wind was at 10-12 knots, with four-foot swells, overcast sky and the water temperature was 55-degrees Fahrenheit. The night before, the crew discussed PFD usage, and all agreed to wear them. In the morning boat preparation, the final act was to get the PFD's on deck, just before the call for the jibe. The throwable flotation device was left below. With time running short, everyone looked at the PFD's on the cockpit floor and figured to put them on, right after the jibe.

Liz Sears, the bow crew, went forward for the jibe, the boat rolled and with the slick decks, went overboard. Then Alana Shearer, the middle crew, went forward to begin a spinnaker recovery and went overboard. The spinnaker sheet (3/8" line) was wrapped around her arm, which dragged her behind the boat.

At this point, the skipper had her entire crew overboard without PFD's, no one available except her to handle sails, watch for two heads in the water, maneuver the boat, and attempt the rescues.

The skipper performed a quick-stop, and with any weight on the stern quarter, the corner sinks, so that the lift is about one-foot up the topside and the middle crew was recovered in about two minutes. The skipper and middle crew then doused the spinnaker and sailed upwind to find and recover the bow crew in the same manner. Back on board after fourteen minutes in the water, the bow crew did not seem to understand general conversation, and later determined that she must have been suffering the effects of hypothermia. Liz and Alana remained calm throughout this situation which contributed to the successful outcome.

Congratulations to Ellen Parry Schmidt for saving two souls and superior boat handling, US SAILING is pleased to present the Arthur B. Hanson Rescue Medal in recognition of this event.

Ralph Naranjo,

Chairman, Safety at Sea Committee
By Direction

The Arthur B. Hanson Rescue Award was awarded at the fall San Diego Association of Yacht Clubs dinner meeting, October 18, 2001 at San Diego Yacht Club. Mission Bay Yacht Club Commodore Ken Karnes presenting on behalf of US SAILING.

DETAILS:

Nominators Name: James McBride
Event Name: W.D.Schock Memorial
Sponsoring Yacht Club: Newport Harbor YC
Date of Event: March 3-4, 2001
Event City: Newport Beach
Event State: CA
Date of Incident: March 4, 2001
Body of Water: Pacific Ocean
First Victims Name: Liz Sears (foredeck)
First Boat Name: Purple Haze
First Boat Length: 20'
First Boat Make Model: Santana 20
Second Victims Name: Alana Shearer (middle)
Second Boat Name: Purple Haze
Second Boat Length: 20
Second Boat Make Model: Santana 20
Rescuing Skipper 1: Ellen Parry Schmidt
Rescuing1 Boat Make Model: Santana 20
Rescuing1 Boat Name: "Purple Haze"
Rescuing1 Boat Length: 20
What was the nature of this incident: Crew overboard
Did a Mayday call go out: No.
Who responded: The skipper of the affected boat handled the whole thing.
Was any injury sustained by the victim: Hypothermia.
Can your story be published: Yes
Can you provide articles about this event: None.
Was a PFD worn: No
What position was the victim working before they went in: 1. Foredeck 2. Middle
Was this day or night: Day
Wind speed: 10-12
Wave height: 4' est.
Water temperature: 55 F (est.)
Air temperature: 60 (est.)
How much time did the victim spend in the water: 1. 10-15 min; 2. 2 min
What recovery method was used: Don't know
Did the victims boat lose site of the victim: 1 Yes 2. No
What search pattern was used: None needed; regained sight quickly
Was electronic MOB function used to locate the victim: No.
Was a rescue swimmer put in the water: No
Did the victim have a strobe light or whistle: No
What color clothes were visible above the water: Don't know
Was the victim able to help in the recovery: 1. No 2. Yes
What is the topside height?
Was a Lifesling aboard: No
Was the race sailed under ORC regulations: No
What happened:
The skipper is from Mission Point, San Diego area. And drove 90 miles north to go to Newport Harbor. "Mission Bay Yacht Club"

While sailing to the racecourse, this Santana 20 hoisted its spinnaker for pre-race practice. Weather overcast, wind 10-12 knots, swells, water temp about 55 F. The 3-person crew was all female, with experienced bow and helmsperson, and an inexperienced sailor in the middle position. To clear a line, the bow person went forward, and fell overboard, with spinnaker still flying. To initiate the man-overboard recovery, the skipper directed the middle crew to douse the chute, something she lacked experience doing. She started it down, lost her footing on the wet deck, and fell overboard. At this point, the skipper had her entire crew overboard without PFD's, and the spinnaker lowered but not stowed, and no one available except her to handle sails, watch for two heads in the water, maneuver the boat, and haul crew back on board. Somehow she managed to do all this unaided. Returning quickly to the middle crew, she got her on board -- not an easy task in a Santana 20. She then relocated the bow crew, and with the help of the middle crew, got her safely on board. The bow person, not realizing she was only the first of two overboard, asked why the rescue took so long -- but forgot the answer, suggesting at least mild hypothermia.

I was not a witness to this incident, but heard reports of it after the fact. I have talked to the skipper, who verified that it took place. I am not aware that the incident was reported to the race committee, but I am confident that it can be verified by other participants (although none were close enough to the scene to assist.) I am calling it to your attention because it strikes me as an example of commendable seamanship to lose your entire crew overboard with spinnaker up, and get them back safely without engine or assistance. If you agree, let me know, and I will provide the details marked "withheld" above.

What type hypothermia included: Mild hypothermia, not officially diagnosed, probably affected the bow crew, the first overboard.

How did victim help himself back onboard: Middle crew, the first recovered, was in good shape, and able to help haul the bow crew aboard later.

How did the victim get hoisted onto the deck: Brute force

Clarifications from Ellen Parry Schmidt -

The night before racing, the skipper and crew talked about wearing their PFD's the next day and agreed it was appropriate, even though complaints did exist about restrictions in the ability to look up and getting hooked on things. After the chute was set, the skipper went below to get the PFD's out and placed them on the cockpit floor. The throwable device was left below. Their course to the starting area was off, so a jibe was called right after the skipper returned to deck. The bow crew thought about getting her PFD on, and figured to do so right after the jibe. On the way forward for the jibe, over she went. The middle crew went forward to start a chute recovery and went overboard, though the spinnaker sheet (3/8" line) was wrapped around her arm and dragged her behind the boat. The skipper performed a quick-stop, and with any weight on the stern quarter, the corned sinks, so that the lift is about 1' up the topside and the middle crew was recovered in about 2 minutes. The Skipper and middle crew then doused the spinnaker and sailed up wind to find and retrieve the bow crew. Back on board, the bow crew did not seem to understand general conversation, and later determined that she must have been suffering hypothermia. There was a hand-held VHF radio on board, but it was not used. The boat returned to shore, skipping the races that day. After warming/drying up, they did go back out for a sail in the afternoon. A Santana 20 displaces about 1350 lbs. and the keel is 500 lbs.