

The Officers, Directors and Members of

US SAILING

are pleased to present the

ARTHUR B. HANSON RESCUE MEDAL

to

Mrs. Lea Hobbs Murray and

Mr. Robert A. Schemik

FOR THE RESCUES AS FOLLOWS:

REPORT #1

I write to you to relate a rescue that occurred in Masonboro Inlet at Wrightsville Beach, NC on the afternoon of April 27, 1997 on the last day of the USODA World and European Team Trials. The rescue was effected by Mrs. Lea Hobbs Murray of Wilmington, NC driving the Carolina Yacht Club race committee boat *CYC-1*, and Mr. Robert A. Schemik of Southern Yacht Club of New Orleans. I do not know if there were other occupants in the *CYC-1*. The following paragraphs are extracted from a letter to Mr. Corky Potts written following a telephone call from him. He and five other people were in the race committee 21 foot Signal Boat entering the inlet when the boat lost its power. It was swept by a strong falling current from the mouth of the inlet into a large area of high waves, breakers and confused seas. The boat soon capsized and shortly after that foundered.

REPORT #2

It was a pleasure to speak to you last night, and in particular to find that everyone had recovered from the incident Sunday afternoon. While I spoke you seemed interested in the details of the incident that I remembered. I will recount them for you.

Knute Lee, J.C. Moore and I were in my Mako 26. After the first race I began to be concerned about the state of the inlet and discussed it with Roy Hobbs, but did nothing else and did not go to observe it. After the second race I went to the inlet after most of the competitors had finished. I was quite concerned after seeing the state of the waves immediately beyond the mouth of the inlet. I, however, went into and out of the mouth with no difficulty. It appeared that almost all of the competitors had successfully entered calm water.

Then I saw two hard bottom inflatables recovering two Opti hulls from the waves just beyond the mouth. Their efforts seemed successful but to make sure, we went through the white water to the entrance buoy 1/4-1/2 mile offshore and turned north. We went to investigate it and heard Lea Murray announce a May Day. We inquired where they were and when the Coast Guard did not answer, we figured she was on Ch. 68, we called the Coast Guard on Ch. 16 and they responded. We then went to the *CYC-1* and directed the Coast Guard picket boat toward their site. We watched them recover the six people from the water.

This was an arduous and difficult task but they seemed to be having success, and so we did not approach too closely. We feared we might crush someone between the two hulls.

We observed the white hard bottom inflatable that was searching near by flip and reported it to the Picket Boat. I believe that another hard bottom inflatable picked up the operator of this boat. Lea Murray then went in the inlet. The picket boat, two Sea Tow boats and I set up search pattern and ran them until I learned from the safety committee that all of us were accounted for. We then terminated the search and came in the inlet.

The extreme wave state I think was caused by several factors. The wind direction blowing in the face of the current from a rather high falling tide probably were the major factors.

The efficacy of your safety check-in and check-out procedure has been validated for all of the CYC people. Perhaps a tag for the RC and safety boat people might be considered.

It seems to me that this incident might be the type of seamanship and rescue that the US SAILING Arthur B. Hanson Rescue Medal award is designed to recognize.

**The Arthur B. Hanson Rescue Award was awarded to
Mrs. Lea Hobbs Murray and Robert Shemik**

DETAILS

1. There were 6 occupants in the boat that foundered. The water temp. was 61 degrees.
2. Only one occupant was wearing a life jacket. She was Catherine Loe, the ER physician.
3. The order of rescue was, David Cox, Robert Conrad, Jo Lyn Ruyor, Larry Cullen, Catherine Loe and Corky Potts.
4. Jack Crouch apparently was the driver of the capsized hard bottom inflatable and we do not know who rescued him but they were standing by during the recovery of these six persons.
5. Leigh Murray, a member of the Carolina Yacht Club was the operator of the Yacht Club launch *CYC-1*. This vessel is a 21' Grady White boat with a cuddy cabin. She was accompanied by Robert A. Shemik of Southern YC. There was a third passenger in the *CYC-1*. She was not a seaman and could provide minimal help.

Bobby Shemik observed the red buoy in the waves off the mouth of the inlet as they were going in the inlet. This aroused their suspicion and they went to it and then moved offshore in the direction of the current and saw more flotsam and continued their search until they found the occupants. They recovered David Cox first and then fashioned a sling from some rope and then proceeded to recover the rest of the people from the water. Robert Conrad was suffering partial drowning, and was thought to also be having coronary insufficiency. He required almost constant CPR initiated and directed by Catherine Loe until they arrived at the hospital. Jo Lyn Ruyor was initially trapped under the boat, was suffering hypothermia and required overnight hospitalization. The signal boat that foundered was thought to have considerable water in the inner hull.