

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

Dixie Sailing Club Rescue Boat and “Sheet Music”

for the rescue as follows:

On April 4th, 2004 during the Punchbowl Regatta on Lake Martin in Alabama, a Flying Scot sailed by Marty and Charlie French was knocked down and turtled in 15-20 knots of wind. Marty was in the cool 65 degree water unable to climb aboard while Charlie managed to climb on the upturned hull. Ted and Dora McGee were running Race committee and were assisted by Tamara Isaacs-Smith. The race committee played a vital role in this rescue and were assisted by Curt Bird and Bruce Smith aboard “Sheet Music” a Capri 22 that was also a competitor. The situation was getting serious as Marty was in the cold water about 15 minutes. The Capri 22 skippered by Curt Bird, got to the turtled vessel, assessed the situation and immediately dropped sails to help.

When the DSC Rescue boat with the RC Members on board arrived, Bruce Smith of the Capri 22 had gotten on the chase boat with RC member Dora McGee and they were towing Marty to shore. Dora was reassuring Marty whom had now been in the water about 25 minutes; hypothermia and shock were becoming a factor. Dora and Bruce got to the shore and they pulled Marty into the chase boat. Marty was clearly in distress, not as coherent as she should be, shivering, trying to get into the chase boat. Bruce gave Marty dry jackets and they headed back across the lake.

Aboard the DSC Rescue boat, RC Members Ted McGee and Tamara Isaacs-Smith went back to the turtled Flying Scot and rafted up to the vessel long enough to bring Charlie on board. He was shivering and didn't appear to be doing well. After signaling the Capri 22 over, an attempt was made to transfer Charlie to the Capri. As he stepped across, he fell in between the two boats. Curt grabbed the boats to separate them and lost his hold on the Capri, but kept his hold on Charlie. With quick and decisive action Tamara leapt aboard the Capri and brought the boat around to facilitate the transfer.

Congratulations to The rescuing crew of the DSC Rescue Boat and “Sheet Music” for rescuing several competitors in hypothermic and challenging conditions. US SAILING is pleased to present the Arthur B. Hanson Rescue Medal in recognition of this event.

Bill Munster
Safety at Sea Chairman
by direction

The Arthur B. Hanson Rescue Medal was presented to the rescuing crews of the DSC Rescue Boat and “Sheet Music” on April 16, 2005. The presentation was made by Dixie Sailing Club Rear Commodore Keith Bennett on behalf of US SAILING at the Punchbowl Regatta hosted by Dixie Sailing Club at Lake Martin near Alexander City, Alabama



Left to right are: Bruce and Tamara Isaacs-Smith, Curt Bird, Charlie and Marty French, Ted and Dora McGee. The small child in front is Bruce and Tamara's daughter Brianna. Gary Archer, photographer

DETAILS:

Rescuing Crews Names:

Bruce Smith was crew and assisted in the rescue. Brianna, a five year old crew remained surprisingly calm and assisted Curt and Bruce during the rescue.

Rescuing Boat2 Crews Names:

Ted and Dora McGee were in charge of Race committee for the regatta. Also on the RC was Tamara Isaacs-Smith. The race committee played a vital role in this rescue. For the specifics see the What Happened section which was written by Ted.

What happened:

Sunday April 4 the wind was between 12 and 15 with occasional gusts up to 17-18. When we first went out the wind was straight out of the north and so we started to set up for 360 degrees. There was a big shift left then back to 360. I decided to turn the course back to 330 degrees, anticipating a permanent shift. As soon as the weather mark was set the wind came back left and set right on 330 degrees. The first race was great. Two C22s and one Flying Scot retired as the wind was building a little, though we never saw anything over 20. We decided to run a second race as it was early yet and the course was in good shape.

The second race problems begin to occur both on the course and with competitors. We had one chase boat and Dora was alone on it. She was sitting at the leeward mark. There were only two of us on the committee boat, Tamara and myself. As the last C22 rounded the leeward mark to head for the finish the mark broke free and was blown to shore. Dora immediately radio in and took up a position to be the leeward mark. The Flying Scots all understood she was now the mark and were rounding ok.

One of the Flying Scots, sailed by Marty and Charlie French, was knocked down close to Dora's position. Dora radioed that they looked ok and the rest of the Flying Scots rounded without incident and headed back to the finish. Two of the three Portsmouth boats rounded before more problems. I saw the boat turtle and we had one more boat to round, who was still several minutes away. Pete Page was finishing on his C22 and he was the only one in ear shot (couldn't raise anyone on VHF) and I sent Pete back to help Dora. Marty was in the water and Charlie was sitting on the turtled boat. This is an older couple and she is pretty heavy and suffers from arthritis. Pete had a ladder on the back of his boat and we hoped to bring her on board his boat. Pete was solo and he was unable to get Marty on his boat. We felt the situation now was getting serious as Marty was in the cold water about 15 minutes. The last boat, a Capri 22 skippered by Curt Bird, got to Dora to round, assessed the situation and immediately dropped sails to help. We pulled anchor from the committee boat and also headed to the area.

When we got to the area Pete was hanging around the turtled Flying Scot, as well as the Capri 22. Charlie was ok - just sitting on top of the boat. Bruce was crewing on the Capri 22. He had gotten on the chase boat with Dora and they were towing Marty to shore. This really scared me, because we could see no movement from Marty - and I could only see an upturned hand and a little bit of blue life jacket in the water. When we got close enough I could see she was ok and Dora kept talking to her. That was one of the things Dora did the whole time - she kept talking to Marty. Marty had now been in the water about 25 minutes and hypothermia and shock were taking over. I felt we only had a few minutes to get her out. Dora and Bruce got to the shore and we came up on the stern of the chase boat while

Bruce helped her out of the water and into the chase boat. Marty was clearly in distress, not as coherent as she should be, shivering, and wobbly trying to get into the chase boat. Dora and Bruce gave Marty dry jackets and headed back across the lake.

Tamara and I went back to the turtled Flying Scot. The Capri and Pete Page on his C22 were still hanging around the area. Marty and I managed to raft up to the Flying Scott long enough to bring Charlie on board. He was shivering and didn't appear to be doing well. We signaled the Capri over to us. Remember, Bruce has gone with Dora to take Marty in. Left on the Capri is the owner Curt and Bruce and Tamara's five year old daughter, Brianna. Brianna is in tears because her daddy left the boat - Tamara talks to her telling her everything is ok. Curt brings the Capri 22 along side and Tamara and I catch it. Our intent to to put Charlie on the Capri so they can take him in and get him warm. We would deal with the Flying Scott. As Charlie is stepping across to the Capri and wave lifts the boat about three feet and he falls in between the two boats. Both Curt and I grab for him, because if he goes in and gets slammed between the two boats we could lose him. As Curt grabs the boats separate and he holds on to the committee boat, losing his hold on the Capri, but keeping his hold on Charlie. Now the Capri only has Brianna, the five year old and it is floating away. Brianna starts screaming and Tamara makes a flying leap from the stern of the committee boat onto the Capri. Meanwhile. Curt and I are still trying to keep hold of Charlie. I got a good enough hold on Charlie so that Curt could get on the committee boat, then we both pulled him up. Tamara brings the Capri around again and this time the transfer is more successful. Curt, Tamara, Briana, and Charlie head in, followed by Pete Page. In the meantime, Dora and Bruce return to help with the Flying Scott. They took it in tow, hoping to tow it to shallow water where we could right it. - but the mast kept hitting bottom and getting stuck. The sails were still set and cleated, so we knew we couldn't right it.

We decided to tow it back to the club. With the sails still up and cleated we had to go very slow, in addition, if I went a little fast the boat would submarine. We tied the bow as close to the committee boat as possible to keep the bow up. Another power boat from the club arrived to help and I sent Dora in with the scores. Keith and two other Dixie members returned on the chase boat Dora had been on to help tow the boat in. We also had Bill who had gotten on our boat when the other power boat arrived. Our plan was to tow the boat to a deep water dock at Dixie. In open water and going against the now 18-20 knot wind with rolling waves I had no steerage due to the drag from the Flying Scott. Keith tied a line from the chase boat to the committee boat to pull our bow around. It took a little over an hour to get into the calm water by the club and the Flying Scott - still turtle up against the dock. It took eight men and the chase boat to finally right the Flying Scott. After it was bailed out the boat looked ok and other club members towed it around to the ramp and pulled it out.

In review - I think we could have lost Marty had it not been for the effort of the Capri crew and Dora. In addition, Charlie was in bad shape by the time we were able to assist him. Additionally, when Charlie went in the water between the committee barge and the Capri 22 - Curt put himself between the two boats to protect Charlie. We didn't have a shortage of help and it was great to see all the people from Dixie pitch in. When we left both Marty and Charlie seemed ok - although Marty was still a little shaken. I am not sure whether it was the wind, the stress, or her constant communication to me and talking to Marty - but Dora's throat is all swollen and talking is difficult. However, everything ended well.

Ted McGee
Race Committee Chairman

Date of Incident: April 4, 2004
Event Name: Punchbowl Regatta
Sponsoring Yacht Club: Dixie Sailing Club
Event City: Alexander City
Event State: AL
Body of Water: Martim Lake
Was this day or night: day
Air temperature: 70
Water temperature: 65-70
Wind speed: 15-20
Wave height: 1'
First Victims Name: Charles French
First Boat Length: 19'
First Boat Make Model: Flying Scot

Second Victims Name: Marty French (f)
Second Boat Length: 19'
Second Boat Make Model: Flying Scot
Was a PFD worn: yes
What type: life vest
What type1: kife vest
Rescuing Skipper 1: Curt Bird
Rescuing1 Boat Make Model: Capri
Rescuing1 Boat Length: 22
Rescuing Boat2 Skippers Name: Dora McGee
Rescuing Boat2 Make Model1: Carolina Skiff
Rescuing Boat2 Length: 20'
What was the nature of this incident: Rescue of Skipper and crew from a capsized/turtled boat.
What recovery method was used: Charles was rescued from the turtled hull, Marty was towed to shallow water and lifted into the boat.
Did the victims boat lose site of the victim: no
What search pattern was used: n/a
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: blue
Was the victim able to help in the recovery: no
Was any injury sustained by the victim: no
Was a Lifesling aboard: no
Was it used: n/a
How much time did the victim spend in the water: 25 - 35 minutes
Did a Mayday call go out: no
Who responded: n/a
Was the race sailed under ISAF regulations: n/a
If so what category: n/a
Nominators Name: Keith Bennett
Nominators Address: Post Office Box 240246
Nominators City: Eclectic
Nominators State: Al
Nominators Zip Code: 36024
Can your story be published: yes
Can you provide articles about this event: no
what position: Marty was skipper, Charles was crew

How did the victim get hoisted onto the deck:

Charles was able to climb from the hull of the Flying Scot to the Rescue boat. Marty, being hypothermic had little or no arm strength. Being a large woman the crew were unable to pull her into the boat. Dora McGee made a quick decision to tow Marty to a nearby beach on an island to get her out of the water and into the boat.

What type hypothermia included: hypothermia