

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

Earth Explorer

for the rescue as follows:

On June 10, 2000 off of Belmont Harbor, Chicago, IL in building Southwest 15 knot winds, 82-degrees air temperature at 11 am, in preparing for their sail, Earth Explorer observed a Vanguard 15 capsize. In the puffy winds, with each attempt to right the boat, a gust would roll the boat over again.

With the water temperature at 58 degrees and the victims wearing T-shirts, shorts, and PFDs, hypothermia is a major risk. After more capsizes, two Jetskis offered assistance and the crew crawled up out of the water. Next a 25 ft. motorboat helped by sending two men in wet suits. The boat righted, the crew swam back, and they started sailing. Again they capsized. By 11:30, the wind had increased to 20 to 25 knots as a storm was approaching.

Now the crew was exhausted and asked the Jet ski to take her back to the harbor. The skipper of the Vanguard continued to right and sail the boat. However, each time he righted the boat, the winds blew him away from the harbor and out to sea.

As all other potential rescue boats left the area, Earth Explorer started to tow the boat and it capsized in the strong winds, and turtled. Earth Explorer abandoned the tow and shifted into the rescue of the skipper. They observed that he was shaking uncontrollably. The wind now built to 30 with gusts to 40 knots.

One crewmember tossed the Lifesling toward the victim, he grabbed it and was pulled to the rope ladder. Four of the crew dragged him in, as dead weight. Exhaustion and hypothermia had him weak and his skin felt like a dead fish. He was dried after being submersed for 45 minutes. A doctor on board, found his pulse at 90, his eyes rolling back and nearly unconscious. He had cuts and bruises as well.

Heading towards shore, a call was made on Channel 16 as waves hit the Tartan-10 and drenched the entire crew. Upon arrival at the dock, the victim was talking and was able to take small amounts of water. The Chicago Fire Department paramedics lifted the victim off of Earth Explorer on to a seated gurney. Oxygen was administered for about 15 minutes. Afterwards, Earth Explorer provided a Powerade drink for electrolytes. The victim declined transport to a hospital.

The crew of Earth Explorer included skipper Bill Luksha, Dee Van Leeuwen, Dorothy Cutrone, Andy Fisher, Lyn Parsons, Jason Schwyn and Dr. Carrie Phillips. Congratulations to the rescuing crew on Earth Explorer for assisting a mariner in distress. 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 Chicago Yachting Association's "Yachting Ball"
on November 11, 2000 by US SAILING
Director Don Glasell on behalf of US SAILING.**

DETAILS:

June 10, 2000 Saturday

Earth Explorer Sailboat activity and rescue of James P. Little, Chicago, IL.

Today the crew of Earth Explorer had a race practice planned to hone our skills of large fleet race starts and various spinnaker sets and takedowns. Earth Explorer is a Tartan 10 racing sailboat, 33ft long, which we sailed in the Mackinaw race last year. The Crew this day consisted of Dee Van Leeuwen, Dorothy Cutrone, Andy Fisher, Lyn Parsons, Jason Schwyn and his wife Dr. Carrie Phillips. Carrie is a medical doctor at Northwestern Memorial Hospital in Chicago. We met at Belmont Harbor, Chicago, at 10:00 and loaded and left the dock at about 10:30. It was a warm 82 degree sunny but breezy morning. Motoring out I saw a new Tartan 10 owner Dr. Poulus on his boat "Flame" and bid him a good day. Leaving the harbor, the crew prepared the boat rigging to raise the jib and spinnaker. The wind today was gusty southwest. The harbor was shielded from southwest winds due to a series of large 10 to 15 story apartment buildings. However once outside the harbor we could feel the true wind speed and the boat anemometer registered speed of 15 to 20 kts. The time was approximately 11:00 motoring about ¼ mile east of the harbor entrance when I did a final check of the near by boats for traffic before raising the mainsail. We decided to put in a double reef due to the gusty winds. It was then, when one of the sailboats previously observed was no longer visible. Another member of our crew saw and pointed to a capsized boat about 1/3 mile to the northeast. With focused observation, we saw 2 sailors in the water, attempting to right the small boat. The crew consisted of a man and woman. He was attempting to right, standing on the centerboard, but almost immediately was hit by another gust and capsized. The boat was a 15 ft Vanguard. The water temperature was 58 degrees. The Vanguard sailors were dressed in T-shirts, shorts, and PFDs.

We immediately changed direction and headed toward the capsized boat. After about 15 minutes of 3 more capsize, two Jetskis motored in to offer assistance and the woman crawled up out of the water. Next a larger 25 ft. motorboat with 8 people helped by sending 2 men in wet suits to right the boat. The Vanguard boat righted, the woman swam back, and they started again. After sailing 3 minutes they capsized again. By 1130 the wind was increasing to 20 to 25kts. A storm was approaching the area from the south.

This time the woman crew was exhausted and she asked the Jet ski boater to take her back to the harbor. The owner of the Vanguard continued to right and sail the boat. We later learned his name as James P. Little. However each time he righted the boat, he had limited progress and as the strong southwest winds were blowing him directly away from the harbor and "out to sea".

All the other potential rescue boats left the area so we offered to tow him back. We dropped a 100ft floating line which he tied to his bow. We started towing but again, due to the strong winds, the boat capsized, and turtled. James was holding to the slippery bottom. We abandoned the towing and decided to just rescue the sailor. As we approached we could see he was shaking uncontrollably. The winds also increased to an average 30 kts with gusts to 40. About 30% of the southern sky was filled with the thunderstorm.

I maneuvered from downwind and slowly pulled Earth Explorer to within 5ft of his position, the centerboard of his turtled boat. Lyn tossed the line of our Lifesling. James was pulled to and caught the lowest rung of our rope ladder. Four of our crew dragged him in, as dead weight. He was totally exhausted. We laid him down in the seat of the cockpit and struggled to remove his wet clothes and dry him off. He was covered with dry towels. James had been in the cold water for about 45 minutes. The time was about 1215. Dee later commented that his skin felt cold like a dead fish.

As I throttled up the Earth Explorer motor, Jason called on the radio, Channel 16 to alert the authorities, and to request an ambulance at the Chicago Yacht Club dock at Belmont. Dee cradled his head, Dr. Carrie took his pulse(it was 90) and towed his shivering body. I could see his face and his eyes were rolling, as he nearly went unconscious. Also, his legs were cut and bruised in several places. The wind was now 30 to 40kts and waves hit our Tartan-10 boat and drenched the entire crew.

After struggling upwind back to the harbor we entered and motored up to the Chicago Yacht Club dock at about 12:45. The CYC desk manager called for an ambulance. By this time James Little was talking and was able to take

small amounts of water. The Chicago Fire Dept. ambulance arrived the paramedics lifted James off of Earth Explorer on to a seated gurney. Dr. Carrie introduced her credentials and instructions. Oxygen was administered for about 15 minutes. Afterwards, we provided James a powerade drink for electrolytes. Dr. Carrie was concerned for possible kidney damage. James was recovering and declined transport to a hospital. By 13:30 he was able to stand up and walk on his own.

The Chicago Police Marine Unit 6 also arrived, Officer Mike Belluomini took the report along with Dave Strandberg. The Vanguard was to be towed back in by Lifeguard boat from Diversey harbor. They called it a hazard to navigation.

James Little (28) had just purchased the Vanguard 15 and was taking his fiancée Kristen Gabel out for an initial sail. James had been on the sailing team of his college. James and Kristen, residents of Chicago, are to be married in October. James was very appreciative and thanks the entire crew of Earth Explorer. Kristen shook my hand and said, "Thanks for saving him."

June 11, 2000

Speaking to James Little as a follow up, he related that his body felt sore, as if in a car wreck. He rested the remainder of Saturday. The only damage to the boat was a broken spreader.

Owner of Earth Explorer: William Luksha

Crew: Dee Van Leeuwen, Dr. Carrie Phillips, Jason Schwyn, Lyn Parsons, Andy Fisher, Dorothy Cutrone.