

The Officers, Directors and Members of

US SAILING

are pleased to present the

ARTHUR B. HANSON RESCUE MEDAL

to the crew of

SELKIE

FOR THE RESCUE AS FOLLOWS:

SKIPPER'S WORDS:

On board *Selkie*, about two hours before we finished the race in the early hours, evening was dark, really dark and we had been faired with a SW wind, about 12+knots, maybe 2' seas, as we followed the reefs around to Kitchen Shoal. Ian and 4 crew had just set the chute. We were beaming as they dropped the jib and I steered with one other crewmember in the cockpit. No one was below. There was a deck light on, everyone had good night vision. Ian was at the pulpit and stood up as the bow jumped. The lifeline caught the back of his knees. The mast man called "Ian's overboard." I turned the boat into the wind without knowing which side he had gone over or how far forward he was, but I knew he had an inflatable PFD and his harness. Neither of us in the cockpit could spot anything in the gloom. I stayed back into the wind as I called for the crew to drop the chute (now) backed on the mast. Even in these conditions, the luffing sails and wind made a lot of noise. I got no response from the foredeck. I was concerned with the reefs ahead of us. The other guy in the cockpit thought he saw Ian in the water nearby. I called out to Ian hoping he would yell or whistle back to confirm direction. (We had a hand rope ready to throw.) Ian answered from the foredeck. I am sure it was over in 45 seconds.

No one dropped the halyard because they were all pulling Ian back on board. No one thought to tell the cockpit that he was tethered alongside or that he was safe on board. I had neglected to throw flotation. Ian said that it seemed that the boat had stopped as he hit the water so he was not dragged and the recovery went smoothly. He did say that a crotch strap would have helped. Even with the imperfect communication and certainly in the darkness, stopping the boat was the right thing to do. I think that if the procedure had been to reach off to do a reciprocal, we would have worsened things and maybe filled him with water as he was being towed.

One footnote: The other watch captain told Ian to go below, but he refused and seemed fine. They cleared away the spinnaker and reset the jib, but Ian made an uncharacteristic poor judgment that resulted in a bit of sail damage. An overboard recovery does not end with getting the person alongside or even getting him on deck. Chances are that the person is rattled, and if possible, he should be made to settle down out of harm's way. Nothing happens like the drill.

THE SKIPPER'S WORDS, ADDENDUM:

I am reporting to you from the standpoint of lessons learned:1) how dark a moonless night is even in mild weather. (We could see lights on shore miles away but nothing in the water a few yards away.) 2) Stopping the boat immediately even with the spinnaker set was the right thing to do. (No damage was done to the spinnaker even with its flogging and plastered against the rig.) 3) The sails were very noisy so communication was limited even on a 38-foot boat. 4) I did not throw flotation because I did not know

where to throw it. 5) It is REALLY GOOD to be tethered to the boat, even in moderate, warm conditions.
6) Assume someone who has had something like this happen is rattled and don't give him or her decision-making tasks for a while.

I am honored that the committee believed that *SELKIE's* crew all did the right things.

**The Arthur B. Hanson Rescue Award was awarded to
the Skipper and Crew of Selkie.**