

The Officers, Directors and Members of

US SAILING

are pleased to present the

ARTHUR B. HANSON RESCUE MEDAL

to the crew of

SAN DAD

FOR THE RESCUE AS FOLLOWS:

As reported by Peter M. Dorenbos, September 18, 1992:

To Catalina Fleet 21

In Chicago on July 12, 1992. Five crew aboard Moonraker, a Catalina 22, started the first windward leg of a 12 to 14 mile race in the Jib and Main section of a Midwest Open Racing Fleet (MORF) race. It was a rainy and blustery morning; winds at 15 to 18 mph. Halfway through the first leg, beating she was knocked down by a wind that seemed to be ours alone. We took the knock down all right, "loose the sheets, etc.," but three big waves came. The first climbing up Moonraker's Genoa; the second lifting her bow so the keel actually folded under, despite the so-called lock that was supposed to secure it. With that, the center of gravity had changed and the third wave slapped her bottom and turtled her over.

Crew climbed on her hull and started to right her but, despite the forward hatch being locked and the companionway having been boarded up, the lazarette lockers opened up and took in enough water in 40 seconds that when crew brought her over, the stern never rose up and her bow raised and sank.

What's wrong with this picture? Only one crew had on a life preserver. And, if we'd have had the lazarette lockers latched with something, I probably wouldn't be writing this.

The saving grace was that three boats that race MORF had good attitudes, good reactions and good seamanship, so as that San Dad had five people aboard in probably three or four minutes, and the other two boats circled and watched to ensure a safe rescue.

San Dad (Catalina 27) – Mr. William Lawler, Skipper

Narnia (Hunter 22) – Ken Nelson

Strictly Pleasure (Beneteau 35) – Dan and Mary Ann Hayes

I feel a very special closeness to my fellows and look forward to racing with them next year and many more years after that. Hopefully in front of those wonderful sailors.

As reported by Marty Mudge, July 20, 1992:

"MOONRAKER" now MUCKRAKER

Before I went to bed Saturday July 12, my Dad called and asked if I would like to go to breakfast and Mass with he and mom on Sunday morning. I told him I was going sailing. When he asked if we wear life preservers I replied that they are worn in heavy weather and when handling the "Spinnaker" pole on the bow. While he didn't reply, the following silent moment was enough to make his point.

I awoke with stiff muscles Sunday from riding in a bike trip covering 25 miles in three hours the day before. Paul who introduced me to Pete the owner and captain of Moonraker couldn't make it today. So I wasn't initially in the mood to sail but as I approached the lake on Lake Shore Drive my mood changed and I remembered that the air show would be overhead and my foggy mood turned to anticipation.

It turned out that three other guys were also crewing with me including Joe who is a client of mine and a relative by marriage with Pete. There would be plenty of company on the boat.

With a little delay we boarded Moonraker. A 22 foot Catalina sailing sloop and motored out of Montrose Harbor on a 180 (South) course to starting area number 4 marked by a buoy in the water. "SA4" is about 1.5 miles off the south edge of the Monroe harbor breakwater.

We rigged the sails including the Genoa Jib or front of the mast sail. This sail is usually used in lighter air due to its large size. On the ship's radio, the weather service predicted winds of 10 to 20 knots and waves up to three feet. Anyway with 5 crew members we could offset the "heeling" of the boat due to the heavy wind.

After rigging the sails it was clear that we were at the wrong starting area as there were no other boats around. A check of the racing book indicated that we should be at SA7 which is about 2 miles off of Burnham Harbor.

We were now under sail and heading 180 about 2 miles for SA7. On the way to SA7 the weather got worse due to an approaching storm which first hit the Loop and then spread to include the area off of Burnham Harbor. I went to the cabin and put on my light golf rain suit and a life preserver. Everybody else put on heavy weather gear made of oil cloth over their regular clothes.

The starting areas are always exciting as there are many sailboats in a very close proximity jockeying for position to get a good start for the race. Today with the heavy and shifting winds it was all you could do to avoid hitting another boat or avoid getting hit. Most of the other boats were sailing with no jib or with the storm jib.

The race course that will be sailed is known only when the starting boat (which has it's sails down) outs up a course sign at the stern of his boat. He put up course W-1. We then looked in the course book which translated W-1 into the buoys we have to sail to and around that are located along the Chicago lakeshore for this purpose.

The starting flag went up and because we were in great position, (a boat close by had to give way) and we got off to a great start.

Our first buoy was buoy W on a course 222 or roughly southwest, the source of the wind. As we couldn't sail into the wind we set on a course of 180 due south. The boat was "close hauled" which is the fastest feeling point of sail. This is because the speed of the boat is added to the speed of the wind making you

feel that you are going faster than you really are. Our course speed was 4 to 5 knots which was fast for this boat.

The winds were getting faster and gusting and shifting due to the storm which was now right on us. Waves were probably up to four feet. The effect of the boat was dramatic causing us to "heel to port" 45 to 80 degrees. Pete was struggling with the helm and I remarked to Joe that I wouldn't like to trade places with him.

The crew members were on the rail or high side of the boat and leaning over the safety rail every time the boat heeled over approaching 90 degrees. Pete closed the cabin door with the help of Joe placing the three cabin door boards in the slots and closing the hatch over the boards to secure the cabin. It was now raining hard.

Pete asked me what the next mark was but the course sheet was locked in the cabin. Joe and I started to open the cabin hatch door but were called off by Pete because he needed us on the rail to offset the winds. The hatch door might not have been closed properly because Joe and I were having difficulty getting the hatch door to raise over the top cabin door board.

The wind was gusting and we heeled over about two times 90 degrees. Pete had an earlier experience heeling over burying the leeward rails and the boat righted itself with no problem.

The last time we heeled, Jeff the forward crew member and most experienced announced that we were going down. A large wave hit the genoa sail and pulled the bow into the water. Three more waves hit the "gennie" confirming our "pitchpole" into the water.

All five crew members were now swimming either jumping or falling from the boat. Pete was holding onto the stern and was stunned for about 20 seconds, but quickly recovered. I was at the beam and the other crew were at the bow. We took a quick head count and everybody was accounted for and in good health.

The boat then "turtled" moving counter clockwise with the mast at 6 o'clock. Pete swam to the bow and he and Jeff climbed onto the hull resting on the "keel" trying to get the boat to right itself. The boat continued its counter clockwise movement trying to right itself and never fully recovered past 9 o'clock.

The keel was of the retractable type which had retracted into its slot when it turtled. I'm guessing that should not have happened and probably caused some damage to the hull. John and the other crew members heard a clunk which meant that the keel re-extended and caused some damage. There were hissing sounds indicating the air was leaking out of the hull at a rapid rate.

The boat continued its roll to 9 o'clock with the stern under water and the bow just slightly above the water. Crew members were holding onto the port side as the rigging was on the starboard side. Pete knew that the boat was going under and directed everybody to stay away from the starboard side to avoid getting caught in the rigging and getting pulled to the bottom. The boat sank and we were swimming. It took about 2 minutes from the time we hit the water.

I knew from my coast guard sailing class that the other crew members had about ten minutes to live from the combination of heavy clothing, 4 foot high waves, 60 degree water temperatures and no life preservers. It didn't occur to me that the boat would sink until it did, and I knew we were in trouble.

John was in trouble as the waves would hit his heavy weather jacket hood and pull his head under. He couldn't work on the zipper or he would sink. I swam over to him and let him hang on to my shoulder while I tried to undo his jacket zipper. I got it down to the bottom when a big wave hit us. Somehow I

ended up under water with John using me for a log. I pushed him away and when I surfaced a rescue boat was approaching. John was able to get his coat off and we all swam to the rescue boat.

I didn't know if the boat was under sail and would be able to stop so I swam to the bow, reached up to the bowsprit and grabbed it. I wasn't going to let it get by without me. I counted to three and pulled my leg up to the spinnaker pole stored on deck. Another count to three and I pulled myself onto the deck getting help from a man named Bill, a crew member of the rescue boat.

Joe got run over by the boat and had to swim down 5 feet and away from the boat.

When I ran along the deck to the stern of the boat I heard Pete calling to the attention of the crew in despair that I was missing which I quickly corrected. The remaining crew were pulled into the stern of the boat and the captain ferried us to Monroe harbor where Pete gave the coast guard the necessary reports.

Everybody but I had lost their wallets and car keys and other miscellaneous things that were in the boat. But we were grateful that we had retained our lives. Boats and other things can be replaced.

On the way to Monroe Pete was already thinking about his next boat and how he didn't like the swing keel design. Joe was glad for the experience with this crew so he would be better prepared for sailing safely with his wife, and I feel that I now don't have anything to be afraid of as I have experienced the worst. It is a testimony to the human spirit.

I heard that Pete was looking for Moonraker, now muckraker, on Saturday with a salvage company using the "Loran" coordinates we took on the rescue boat and bottom searching sonar equipment.

Each day I read a daily meditation book. It's meditation as I read it on the morning of July 12 is:

"If you believe that God's grace has saved you, then you must believe that He is meaning to save you yet more and to keep you in the way you should go. Even a human rescuer would not save you from drowning only to place you in other deep and dangerous waters. Rather, he would place you on dry land, there to restore you. God, who is your rescuer, would certainly do this and even more. God will complete the task He sets out to do. He will not throw you overboard, if you are depending on Him."

And life goes on.

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As reported by Joe Des Jardins, Date Unknown:

RELEARNING SOME OLD LESSONS

Southern Lake Michigan is not known for its heavy air. In fact, Chicago's moniker of Windy City is a misnomer as far as this skipper of an overweight, underpowered, hunk of ancient Swedish half-tonner is concerned. Because our fleet races in light conditions so much of the time, we tend to forget some of the basic safety considerations that we learned in every safe boating course we ever attended. Sometimes mother nature reminds us that we need a refresher.

Just a few days ago She did just that. We had a boat sink on the race course.

It's true that no one was hurt; it's true that several of our skippers proved to be excellent seamen in fishing the four crew out of the drink; and it's true that the rest of the race was able to go on as scheduled with only a few sailmaker's bills as the downside. But I know that I, after hearing the details of the sinking, started reviewing in my own mind some of the sloppy safety habits and some changes we should make on JOLI. I chatted with the skipper of the boat that sank and the one thing he mentioned several times was how quickly everything happened. From Knockdown to Turtle to Righting to Sliding slowly backwards to the bottom took about a minute and a half in his mind; so don't think you will have time to do all the things you should have done at the dock when the situation becomes extreme.

Since I do my best thinking with my fingers on the keyboard, I thought to share some thoughts with the fleet and any other sailors who might be listening.

The reason the boat sank was that she flooded after taking a knockdown . Knockdowns happen, they shouldn't, but when a skipper is intent on having the maximum sail up for the conditions and then gets a rogue puff, knockdowns happen. However, a boat won't sink if there is no way for the water to get inside the hull. How many of us on that same day forgot to dog down the forward hatch. Sure, most of us had the companionway slid closed to keep out the rain, but how many of us had the hatch boards in and locked in place (for that matter, how many of us have hatchboards "capable of being secured in position with the hatch open or shut..." (ORC Regs. 6.13))? In fact, the boat sank had his forward hatch dogged down and had his companionway closed with the hatch boards in place. What caused the flooding was the cockpit lockers. When the boat turtled, those big heavy fiberglass seat hatches opened up and swallowed as much of Lake Michigan as they could. And they kept swallowing when the boat was inverted because the through hull for the swing keel pendant became a vent for the trapped air inside the hull (yes, there is a reason for "Soft wood plugs, tapered and of various sizes." (ORC Regs., 6.52)). "She looked like a whale breathing, with her gray VC-17 bottom all shiny and a column of air and spray shooting out the through hull."

Do you make it a practice to latch your seat hatches? Don't you think you should?

Of the four crew on the boat that sank, only one was wearing a life jacket. He was the first person rescued; as a matter of fact he was buoyant enough that he rescued himself by grabbing the pulpit of the rescue boat and swinging himself aboard. Have you ever tried to swim with your foul weather gear on? Try it, and I think you will come up with a policy similar to the one that we are starting as of now on our boat. That is:

If it is foul enough for the skipper to put his rubber pants

on, it is foul enough for life jackets to be mandatory.

I know that we all suggest that our crew don life jackets whenever they feel the need and we never want them to feel it is uncool to be so attired. But the crewpool yuppies being what they are, there are times when the skipper must dictate; and on JOLI that is the new rule. And it includes the skipper too.

It is mid season now, the water is warm enough for you to have a REAL man overboard drill. Why don't you try one on the next trip to the starting line. Oh, okay, you've never even done a pretend one. Then just try one with the horseshoe buoy this weekend. Next weekend you can jump in the water screaming and see how long it takes for the crew to get the boat stopped, turned around, and back to get you; you may find that life jackets should be mandatory sooner on your boat than on mine.

Review the Required Safety Equipment of the Offshore Racing Council (As modified by MORF, they are in the Race Book , starting on page 33); do you have everything you are supposed to have? Our fleet

depends on each of its members to abide by the rules that we publish; it is a matter of good sportsmanship as well as good sense to see that your boat complies with the rules.

As Race Committee chairman I have a special responsibility that every one in our fleet have a good time, since racing is the reason the club exists. But also, as our fleet has gotten more competitive, and aggressive, I note that we have gotten more accident prone; and I cannot think of a more rotten ending for a great MORF race day than to find out a tragedy occurred because we didn't pay enough attention to safety.

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As reported by Peter Dorenbos, September 10, 1992:

TO RESCUE MEDAL - US SAILING

In Chicago on July 12, 1992, Midwest Open Racing Fleet (MORF) started the first Jib section on a 12-14 mile race. It was a rainy, blustery day with winds about 15 or 18 mph.

At approximately 12:00PM, a sharp, hard wind hit the Moonraker along with three big, fast waves and she was over on her side. A wave then lifted her bow and her keel folded up despite the so-called lock and she turtled. Crew climbed on her hull to right her but in less than a minute and a half, and in spite of her forward hull being locked and the companionway having been boarded up, she swallowed water through her lazarette lockers and, on the way to being righted, she sunk leaving crew very vulnerable to our own inadequacies.

Close by, also racing, was San Dad, a 27' Catalina; Narnia, a 22' Hunter; and Strictly Pleasure, a 35' Beneteau. San Dad came at us dropping their sails within, I think, two minutes and had all five crew safe on board within five minutes. Narnia and Strictly Pleasure closely watched the rescue, circling nearby ready to assist if necessary.

I, the forlorned Skipper of Moonraker, therefore nominate the San Dad, skippered by Mr. William Lawler of Lake Forest, Illinois, for the U.S. Sailing Rescue Award. He reacted quickly, without hesitation, and very skillfully in saving five lives (only one crew member of Moonraker was wearing a life jacket). Also if there is such a thing as an honorable mention, I would like to nominate Ken Nelson, Skipper of Narnia; Don and Mary Ann Hayes of Strictly Pleasure who ensured that all were safe during those moments. These individuals, because of their positions, and limited visibility in that weather acted in a most commendable manner.

The details of the rescue are as follows: three crewmen were rescued by throwing lines out and simply boarding on the stern; I was holding on the starboard side and boarded the ladder way; and, one crewman who had literally jumped out of the water on to the bow sprit was grabbed and dragged on board by the seat of his pants.

Simply watching, good reactions and attitudes, and skillful seamanship are the reasons Mr. William Lawler is my nominee for the award. The other skippers have to be mentioned because they were there with the exact same attitudes, ready to act if needed.

MORF has an annual award dinner and this year it will be held on November 7, 1992. I would like to have the award on hand-and honorable mentions, if possible-to be presented to my rescuers at the award dinner so that they can also receive the recognition of their fellow members who will also be present on that night.

Thank you.

**The Arthur B. Hanson Rescue Medal was awarded to
Mr. William Lawler and the crew of the San Dad
for this meritorious rescue event.**