

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

CRAIG and NORA TE STRUTH

for the rescue as follows:

On July 16, 2000 while on their Hunter 336, Irish Mist, outside of the Oakland, California, Craig saw a white object in the distance. Unsure whether they were seeing a fishing boat, overturned sailboat or even a whale, they placed a Mayday call to the Coast Guard just in case. This was a good call since it was early evening, the water temperature was in the low 60's, the wind at 20-25 knots, San Francisco Bay was pretty choppy and had a very strong current.

What they saw was a MacGregor 26X flipping from its side, to upside down. Having just flipped, they were sure then that they would find victims in the water. As the Te Struth's approached, they found seven victims clinging to the hull. They prepared their safety gear for deployment and radioed the Coast Guard that no other boats were in sight and that they were going in for the rescue.

The first approach on the windward side of the upturned boat caused Irish Mist to blow down on it, potentially crushing the victims. They hollered the victims away and made a second approach from leeward. A line was tied between the two vessels and the victims swarmed the transom of Irish Mist. Nora dropped the transom-mounted ladder down, while Craig reached out and pulled victims around to the back end.

Signs of hypothermia were setting in, as Nora had to pull people up the ladder and push them into the cockpit. The owner of the MacGregor and his friend insisted on staying in the water to secure the boat. When the Coast Guard arrived, they ordered the two remaining victims out of the water, and were retrieved by the Te Struths.

All spare clothes and blankets were distributed to the victims and they were fed hot drinks. The Te Struths arranged a tow company to eliminate the hazard to navigation. The victims called the Te Struths their 'Guardian Angels.'

Congratulation to Craig and Nora Te Struth for maintaining a vigilant watch, communicating effectively, prepared to handle this emergency, for adapting to take care of the victims and clearing the waterways of a hazard. 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 to Craig and Nora Te Struth on October 14, 2000 by US SAILING President James Muldoon on behalf of US SAILING. Additionally, the United States Coast Guard awarded the Te Struth's a commendation. USCG Captain Cusson, from San Francisco, awarded their medal to the Te Struth's.

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Craig and Nora Te Struth, Glenn McCarthy SASC, US SAILING President James Muldoon 10/14/00.

Craig and Nora Te Struth, Glenn McCarthy SASC, USCG Captain Cusson 10/14/00.

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Craig and Nora Te Struth, Glenn McCarthy US SAILING Safety at Sea Committee member.

USCG Captain Cusson 10/14/00.

Photos by Ken Signorello

DETAILS:

Victims Name: Tom Wickman + 6 crew

What was the nature of this incident: Capsized - 7 recovered

Did a Mayday call go out: Yes

Who responded: USCG

Was any injury sustained by the victim: N

Can you provide articles about this event: Latitude 38 - Aug 2000, page 121.

Was a PFD worn: N

Was this day or night: Evening

Wind speed: 20-25

Water temperature: low 60's

How much time did the victims spend in the water: 15-20 min.

Was a rescue swimmer put in the water: N

Did the victim have a strobe light or whistle: N

What happened:

On July 16, our Sunday evening was a little more exciting than we had planned. My husband Craig and I were motoring our Hunter 336, Irish Mist, out of the Oakland Estuary, back toward Ballena Bay. Since we had to work early the next morning, and we were later than we had planned, we decided not to put the sails up. We had stopped at Chevy's for dinner and spent a little time chatting with our waiter, who mentioned he was in the Coast Guard. The waiter asked if we had ever been boarded by the Coast Guard, and we responded no, probably because we always have our lifejackets on and visible. We kidded about him making us his next target.

Just as we were approaching the mouth of the Estuary, Craig said, "is that what I think it is?" I moved to see around the mast, and spotted a white object in the distance. My first thought was that it was either a fishing boat or an overturned sailboat, but it seemed to change shape. Craig went to "full speed ahead" and I suggested we call the Coast Guard, if we were wrong, well OOPS, but if not.

As we got closer it was apparent that it was in fact a sailboat, we had actually spotted it while it was flipping from its side to upside down. By that time, the Coast Guard had answered my "Mayday" and we were attempting to report the location of the boat, about 1 mile south of Treasure/Yerba Buena Island. Since the boat had just gone over, we knew that surely people were in the water. Suddenly I saw a person come around from the end of the boat. "Coast Guard,

we have one, two, make that three people in the water!" The next thing we knew, there were seven people, swarming around the hull.

We knew that in this cold Bay water, these people did not have a lot of time. The winds were 20-25, and the Bay was pretty choppy, with a very strong current. We told the Coast Guard on the radio to standby, we were going to attempt a rescue. There was no other boat in sight. I ran down below and grabbed the boat hook & a couple of life jackets, then unhooked our life ring and checked the life sling. Craig hollered that he was going to bring the boat along side of them.

We really expected to find people in shock; mass hysteria. I was waving my arms to let the people in the water know that we had spotted them and that help was coming. To our surprise, as we pulled up, one of the people in the water saw the name of our boat and shouted "Thank God, rescued by the Irish!" Maybe that was what we all needed to bring in some humor to calm us all down. Considering the circumstances those people were showing little signs of panic, (lots of fear, but pretty composed).

We came up on the upwind side, and one of the women immediately let go of the overturned hull and started swimming toward our boat. I tied a dock line to the life ring and threw it to her. To our dismay, the waves started crashing us against the overturned hull. We knew that there was a danger to people swimming between the boats and risk of possible damage to our boat. We sure did not need to have nine people in the water! Tough as it was, we had to yell to the swimming woman to go back to her boat and hang on. We were coming around to the downwind side.

Craig did a great job getting the boat around quickly. I threw a couple of dock lines over to the people, and they managed to get one around the motor of their boat, and one somewhere up front. After that, we had a mad rush of people, swimming to our boat. I ran to the stern, and flipped the seat and ladder to clear access to the swim platform, Craig was reaching over the starboard side and grabbing their arms, pulling the swimmers to the boat.. When they reached the ladder they all seemed to take a step up and freeze, probably shock and relief. I stood half on the swim platform, half in the cockpit, and had to literally pull each person up and push them into the cockpit. All I could think of was "get the next one on, get them out of the water!" The owner and one of the other men, stayed in the water trying to secure their boat.

I started herding people down below, and went ruffling through our sail bags for all the dry clothes we had. The two emergency blankets we had were immediately soaked. I haphazardly threw whatever clothes I found at people and told them to get out of some of the wet things and put on some dry. Guess I could have paid more attention to who got what. They made a real fashion statement; men in women's sweaters, or farmer johns, no shirt and a hat, women in men's sweatshirts, and an occasional pair of long johns!

About that time, the Coast Guard showed up, and made the last two men get out of the water. I was making hot drinks, and all the wet sailors were starting to come to life. We were all just so grateful that things had worked out OK! Funny thing, when the Coast Guard came on board, it turned out that they were the crew of our off duty waiter! I laughed "I knew he was going to set us up to get boarded!"

After the Coast Guard left, we all decided to wait around for Vessel Assist, to make sure the boat got taken care of. It is amazing how a crisis can bring people together. They are all such good people and we just thank God that we were able to be there for them. Craig and I had spent some time that morning, buying a gift for a sick friend, in a store called Angel's Crossing. The shopkeeper and I spent some time talking about the power of Angels. As we sat in the cabin of our boat with all those cold wet people, they kept repeating that we were their "Guardian Angels." I knew then that my sick friend would get better, because the Angels were with us that day.

How did the victim get hoisted onto the deck:
Swim ladder

Glenn,

The Te Struth's started with Basic Keelboat in Nov/Dec '96. They took their Basic Cruising classes in Jan/Mar of '97.

They've been sailing with Club Nautique ever since.
Best, David