

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

CSX DISCOVERY

**for the rescue as follows:**

On November 17, 2002 Summer Heat, a Hunter 376 was participating in The Bahamas 500 rally organized by Nautech Enterprises from Beaufort, NC to the Abacos. After going through a number of storms over five days and closing in on ninety-six miles from the destination, a new storm developed with 50-knot winds and 20-foot seas.

Motor sailing under mainsail, the slides holding the mainsail to the mast began to pop off like a zipper. Now the mainsail was flogging from side to side and within two minutes had wrapped and tore the port spreaders off the mast. Next the mast broke in two with a portion of the mast overboard. The rigging in the water quickly wrapped around the propeller and the boat laid a hull in the large seas.

A Mayday call was made over the Single Side Band radio. The United States Coast Guard responded with a jet, which found Summer Heat in minutes. The jet located the 700' container ship CSX Discovery and directed her to Summer Heat's location, with an estimated distance of two hours.

With dusk approaching, Captain Hess and crew of CSX Discovery arrived and missed Summer Heat in the first approach. In the second approach, the ship and sailboat came together and lines were dropped from the ship and tied off. With CSX Discovery no longer moving, she had 5 minutes of relative stability, before the ship would be in danger of rolling.

With the two vessels heaving and bouncing in the waves at different rates, Summer Heat was taking a pounding. The crew of CSX Discovery deployed their Jacob's ladder, the opened then pilot's hatch which placed CSX Discovery in peril of flooding her engine room. One-by-one the Summer Heat crew made the leap between the heaving boats at the command of the CSX Discovery crew who were holding each other to hold the crew on board and pull the Summer Heat crew inside. All hands were saved.

Congratulations to CSX Discovery for coming to the aid of mariners in distress, placing their ship and crew in peril and saving the four souls on Summer Heat. US SAILING is pleased to present the Arthur B. Hanson Rescue Medal in recognition of this event.

Ronald C. Trossbach  
Chairman, Safety at Sea Committee  
By Direction

The Arthur B. Hanson Rescue Medal was presented November 10, 2003 on board CSX Discovery in Jacksonville, Florida by Dick Allsopp, US SAILING Vice Chair of the Training Committee for Powerboats.



News crew, Captain John Hess, Dick Allsopp & Wally Becker



Captain John Hess & Dick Allsopp



Captain John Hess & Skipper David Hope



Captain John Hess, Dick Allsopp & Wally Becker



Hannah Combs, Dave Graf, Jeff Akins, David Hope & Captain John Hess



Skipper David Hope & Captain John Hess



Captain John Hess

News crew, Captain John Hess, Dick Allsopp & Wally Becker Captain John Hess & Dick Allsopp Captain John Hess & Skipper David Hope Captain John Hess, Dick Allsopp & Wally Becker Hannah Combs, Dave Graf, Jeff Akins, David Hope & Captain John Hess

Skipper David Hope & Captain John Hess Sitting Left to Right: Captain John Hess (Horizon Discovery), Richard Allsopp (US SAILING), Skipper David Hope (Summer Heat), Wally Becker (Vessel Superintendent of Horizon Lines). Standing Left to Right: Donald Duffy (Chief Engineer Horizon Discovery), Rick Clark (Operations Supervisor Horizon Lines), Michael Morrissey (First Assistant Horizon Discovery), Jeff Akins (Summer Heat), Hannah Combs (Summer Heat), Dave Graf (Summer Heat), Cliff Bartley (Hazardous Materials Manager Horizon Lines), Matt Dunne (Maintenance Supervisor Horizon Lines), Kim Priest (Equipment Manager, Terminal Operations Horizon Lines), Tami Porter (Regional Manager, Terminal Operations Horizon Lines). Center Photo: The CSX Horizon Discovery

Captain John Hess  
Photo's by Cal Paulsen of Conference Connections, Inc.

**DETAILS:**

On the 5th day of heavy weather, S/V Summer Heat was approximately 96 nm north of Marsh Harbor, Abacos. Had suffered 30-35 k winds through out the previous night with much heavier gusts during frontal squalls. Sustained damage to both sails early in the trip.

Strong frontal passage through the night and on the 5th day. Turns out that we were sandwiched between two fronts. With no jib and a doubled reefed main, we were motor sailing directly into heavy wind. The seas had built through out the night. Hove to for a while during the morning, but, decided to return to motor sailing.

at approximately 1400 Nov. 17, 2002, the wind increased to 50k and stayed there. The sail slides on the double reefed main began popping off, like a zipper. The loose main then slammed into the port spreaders, breaking both the upper and lower spreaders with in a matter of a minute or two. At that point the mast broke in two places and a portion of it went over the port side. As we had been motor sailing, the prop became instantly fouled with the rigging or halyard. Summer Heat then laid a hull to the 20' seas and the 50k winds.

We activated the gpirb and issued a "may day" over the ssb. One of our rally mates heard the mayday and relayed our information to another rally boat that had made it into port at Marsh Harbor. That Capt. contacted the U.S. Coast Guard, Miami, who directed a small jet airplane to our location in a matter of minutes.

The Coast Guard located the CSX Discovery, a mere two hours away and directed her to respond to our aid. All we had to do was stay afloat long enough for the CSX Discovery to reach us.

We were in a very precarious situation as we could not cut the mast away from the boat since it was fouled in the prop. and we feared that if we cut the mast away, the weight of the mast would pull the prop and shaft out of the boat.

A second cargo ship was located about 45 minutes away and was dispatched to us. The captain of that foreign registered ship did not want to respond as he said that the seas were too big and the wind too strong to attempt a rescue. The ship did reluctantly respond after being threatened by the Coast Guard. That rescue attempt went so badly that I commanded them to stay clear of us and not make a second attempt.

The CSX Discovery, by then, was about one half hour away and coming to us. Cpt. Hess assured the crew of Summer Heat that he would make a safe approach and a safe rescue. The CSX Discovery's first approach was not successful, but, on the second approach, Capt. Hess cut the power to his engine and drifted down to us. This was a highly skillful and difficult task to accomplish. We were still in 50k of wind with 20' seas and had taken several breaking wave crests over the cockpit of S/V Summer Heat. This attempt was also critical as it was getting dark outside and a nighttime rescue would be unbelievable.

As the container ship and the 37' sailboat came along side each other, CSX Discovery crewmembers rained down heavy lines upon us so that we could secure Summer Heat to the CSX Discovery. Conditions were extremely dangerous and violent due to the high seas and heavy wind which caused the two vessels to crash into each other repeatedly and to heave at different rates.

The rescue team had deployed a Jacob's ladder over the side of the CSX Discovery. I, quite frankly, have no idea how many of my crew would have successfully climbed that ladder to safety as the vessels were heaving at different rates with a 20' difference in height as the two boats rose and fell. There were still tremendous collisions even though the vessels were tied together.

At the last minute, Chief Mate Robin Espinosa decided to open the pilot's hatch for us. This action put the CSX Discovery at risk of flooding her engine room while the hatch was open. They, in fact, did take on seawater while the hatch was open. The Chief Mate radioed me that she was opening the hatch and my crew prepared to make the leap to safety. As the hatch opened we could see that the Chief Mate had deployed her rescue team at the very entrance or opening of the hatch. These brave crewmembers of the CSX Discovery risked their very lives to get us on board their ship. A crewmember named Luke was crouched on one side of the hatch and another member was on the other side. Others were directly behind them. I could plainly see Chief Mate Espinosa directing her team. Jammer, the 16-year-old Springer Spaniel was the first to be rescued as he was thrown through the air into the pilot's hatch. My sailing and life partner, Hannah Combs, was next. She stepped out on the toe rail of Summer Heat and yelled to Luke to take her hand. The two vessels were still heaving up and down at about a 20' difference. Timing it perfectly, Luke, at great peril to himself, reached out and pulled Hannah as she jumped into the hatch. Another CSX Discovery member later told me that he was the one who was holding Luke by the belt so that he wouldn't fall out of the hatch.

Had any of us fallen, we would have been instantly crushed to death. It wasn't until that crewmember told me that he was keeping Luke from falling out that I realized what jeopardy that they had placed themselves in to save us.

By the time that Hannah got on board, the boats began shifting fore and aft, making it more difficult to time the dives to safety. Luke and the others were there to encourage us and coach us as to when to dive through the entrance as we literally had only a few seconds per person when the boats were aligned for an attempt.

Ultimately, all of the human Summer Heat crew were saved as well as Jammer the wonder dog.

Capt. Hess later told me that the CSX Discovery has only about five minutes of relative stability in those 20' seas after cutting forward power.

While I am very thankful to the U.S. Coast Guard for the roll that they played, I can not adequately express my deepest gratitude to Capt. John Hess, Chief Mate Robin Espinosa, the rescue team, and the entire crew of the container ship CSX Discovery. They courageously went out of their way to help people they had never seen before and placed their ship and themselves at great risk to do so. I have been in law enforcement for 29 years and never have I seen an act any more brave or giving than what happened the afternoon of Nov. 17, 2002. For this, I have the great pleasure of nominating the above for the Arthur B. Hanson Rescue Medal.

The rally departed Beaufort, N.C. the previous Weds. morning. Summer Heat had traveled the ICW from Colington Island N.C. (The Outer Banks) to Beaufort. The trip was to be from Beaufort to Marsh Harbor, Abacos.

Summer Heat was lost at sea, never heard from her again. It still pains me to say that.

The CSX Discovery runs between Puerto Rico and Jacksonville, Fla. every two weeks. She was in route to Jacksonville and delivered us to the Jacksonville Port Authority the following morning around 1030 a.m.

CNN and the national TV networks carried the story as well as a newspaper in the Bahamas.

By the way, the Capt. had just been assigned to the Discovery two weeks prior and no member had ever attempted a rescue before. They were totally new to the situation, but, totally professional as well.

Nominators Name: David P. Hope  
Event Name: The Bahamas 500, 2002  
Sponsoring Yacht Club: Nautech Enterprises  
Date of Event: Nov. 17, 2002  
Event City: Beaufort  
Event State: N.C.  
Date of Incident: Nov. 17, 2002  
Body of Water: Atlantic Ocean  
First Victims Name: David P. Hope, and Jammer 16 yr.dog  
First Boat Name: Summer Heat  
First Boat Length: 37  
First Boat Make Model: Hunter 376  
Second Victims Name: Hannah E. Combs  
Third Victims Name: Jeff Akins  
Fourth Victims Name: David Graf  
Rescuing Skipper: Capt. John Hess  
Rescuing Boat Make Model: container ship  
Rescuing Boat Name: CSX Discovery  
Rescuing Boat Length: 700'  
What was the nature of this incident: abandoned ship  
Did a Mayday call go out: yes  
Who responded: U.S. Coast Guard jet, CSX Discovery container ship  
Was any injury sustained by the victim: yes

What type, hypothermia included: bumps and scrapes

Was the race sailed under ISAF regulations: y

If so what category: Category 2

Rescuing Crews Names: Chief Mate Robin Espinosa, rescue team leader team members: Luke (unknown last name), several other crew members (unknown names)

What happened: See above narrative