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

BRAD HILLEBRANDT AND LAURA MOONEY

for the rescue as follows:

In June 2001, Brad Hillebrandt and Laura Mooney were on a shakedown cruise in San Francisco Bay in preparation for a cruise to Mexico. When returning to the Bay just east of the Harding Rock Buoy, they jibed onto a starboard tack to get out of the shipping lane because there was a container ship heading outbound approximately two miles away.

Mooney spotted a male windsurfer waving both his arms over his head right in line of the container ships track.

The pair turned straight for the victim and maneuvered into position as quickly as possible starting the engine and furling the staysail. The windsurfer had been stranded and had been hailing boats for a half hour after the wind had died and was unable to keep his windsurfer up. They approached the victim on a beam reach and eased the sail, stopping 10 feet away. Next they lowered the swim ladder and threw the windsurfer a line to pull him to their craft. The victim was tired and cramped having difficulty swimming and climbing the boarding ladder. They tied a line to his windsurfer and towed it behind. Next the pair called the U.S. Coast Guard on their VHF radio to report the incident.

Congratulations to Brad Hillebrandt and Laura Mooney for maintaining a sharp lookout, coming to the aid of a mariner in distress, and clearing the waterway of a navigational hazard. 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 Hanson Rescue Award presentation details are not available.

DETAILS:

Nominators Name: David Forbes
Victims Name: Unknown
Rescuing Skipper: Brad Hillebrandt
What was the nature of this incident: Windsurfer rescue
Was any injury sustained by the victim: N
How much time did the victim spend in the water: 30 mins
Was electronic MOB function used to locate the victim: N
Was a rescue swimmer put in the water: N
Was a Lifesling aboard: Y
Was it used: N
Rescuing Crews Names: Laura Mooney

MOB Drills Pay Off.

My sailing partner Laura and I were recently on our second of two successive weekend "shakedown cruises" before taking my boat down to Mexico. We left on a Friday after work, for a night sail/motor down to Monterey. We had a beautiful weekend in Monterey, then sailed to Santa Cruz for a sunset barbeque at anchor adjacent to the wharf. The next morning we got an early 4:30 AM start and headed back to Alameda. The cruise home was uneventful except for our sightings of several whales, and more dolphin than I have ever seen in northern California waters.

We passed under the Golden Gate Bridge at around 4:00 in the afternoon. When we were a little bit to the east of the Harding Rock Buoy, we jibed onto a starboard tack to get out of the shipping lane because there was a container ship heading out approximately two miles away. It was at this point that Laura, who always keeps a sharp lookout for sea life, noticed a man in the water, waving both his arms over his head. We immediately went into our man overboard routine, but what we ended up doing was not exactly a textbook maneuver. Because of the proximity of the tanker, and the Mans' position dead center in the shipping lane, we felt we had to recover him as quickly as possible. We used a combination of the maneuvers, but mostly, the boat handling and judgment that we learned in our classes, which allowed us to approach and stop as close to the man as possible.

I immediately headed up until we were abeam the Man and then tacked the boat while Laura kept an eye on him. I started the engine just in case we had a bad approach, and when I had him in sight, Laura furled the staysail so that we would have less sail and sheets flogging when we reached him. We approached him on a beam reach and began to slow the boat as we got closer. We released the sheets and came to a stop about ten feet from him. We dropped our swim ladder and threw him a line to enable him to pull himself to the boat. The Man was an exhausted windsurfer who later told us he had been drifting in the water for about half an hour, unable to get anyone's attention. He told us he sailed out to this area and the wind had died down enough that he was unable to keep his windsurfer up. He was so tired and cramped up that he had difficulty swimming the ten feet to the boat and climbing up our transom swim step. His windsurfer was tied to a line and towed behind the boat.

During our recovery, I also hailed the Coast Guard on channel 16 and reported our dilemma. I told them that we were east of the center channel buoy between Alcatraz and Sausalito, and they clarified that I was at the Harding Rock Buoy.. I was trying to figure out if the ship was going to use the north channel or the south channel because at this point the ship was headed right at us and was about a mile away. To my surprise, the Coast Guard said that they did not have that information and would need to make a phone call to find out. I made the decision to motor upwind to the Harding Rock Buoy, knowing that the ship would have to go to the north or to the south. When it was obvious to us that the ship was headed to the north channel, we set off for Chrissy field. We let the Coast Guard know that the situation was under control and they thanked us. As we sailed away, we watched as the ship passed right through the area where the windsurfer had been stranded. We then dropped him off as he thanked us profusely.

We're very thankful for the training we received at Club Nautique. We gained confidence from this experience and a sense of accomplishment. In retrospect, Laura and my biggest complaint about our recovery was that we neglected to throw out our lifesling. Lesson learned… I invite Club Nautique to critique our procedures so that we, as well as your readers, can learn from any mistakes that we made.

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