

The Officers, Directors and Members of

US SAILING

are pleased to present the

ARTHUR B. HANSON RESCUE MEDAL

to

STEVEN WRIGHT

FOR THE RESCUE AS FOLLOWS:

While sailing in a July 4th (1996) regatta sponsored by his Club, the Spray Beach Yacht Club, on Little Egg Harbor Bay, NJ, Mr. Wright spotted a fellow competitor in obvious trouble. Having just rounded the leeward mark and sailing to windward, he observed that the other competitor had fallen out of her Laser. Since she was one of the more inexperienced racers on the course, Steve changed course to go by and ensure that she was not hurt. As he sailed near, he noticed that she appeared to be unconscious and face down in the water. Immediately abandoning the race, Steve came alongside and dove into the water and turned her right over. Although unconscious, she was still breathing. He motioned to the Rescue/Patrol craft and they quickly came over and brought her into their boat. As she was lifted into the rescue boat she regained consciousness, but was disoriented. She was taken ashore and eventually evacuated to an Atlantic City hospital where she was treated for concussion and released that evening.

There is little doubt that Mr. Wright's prompt and effective action resulted in a life saved as the victim would have drowned in her unconscious position and US SAILING is pleased to make this award.

John B. Bonds
Chairman, Safety at Sea Committee
By Direction

DETAILS

RESCUERS WORDS:

Thank you for your letter regarding the rescue last summer. By way of background, I was sailing in the Laser division of my club, Spray Beach Yacht Club, July 4th Championship races. SBYC is located in the town of Spray Beach on Long Beach Island, New Jersey. Sailing takes place on Little Egg Harbor Bay.

It was a relatively mild day (10-15 mph). I was leading the race and was heading upwind after rounding the leeward mark. As I headed upwind, I saw that another sailor, the victim, had fallen off of her Laser. She was still on the downwind leg and, apparently, had been hit by the boom during an accidental jibe. As I sailed over to make sure that she was okay (she was one of the less-experienced sailors in the race), I saw that she was floating face down and not moving. Both she and I were wearing PFD's (it is a requirement of our Club that racers wear PFD's). I was wearing a Type III manufactured by Extrasport (Model Sliver #EXSL). I dove into the water and was able to reach her quickly. I turned her right side up and saw that, although unconscious, she was breathing.

I motioned to the Rescue and Patrol craft working the race and they quickly came over. They (Mr. & Mrs. Larry Holden) brought her on to their boat. As they lifted her into the boat she regained consciousness, but was disoriented. They immediately headed for our Club (about a ½ mile away) at a high speed, while trying to raise the Coast Guard on their radio. As they sped through the Intercoastal Waterway channel near the Club, they attracted the attention of a NJ State Marine Police officer on patrol. He then radioed for the Beach Haven Rescue Squad. The Squad arrived at the Yacht Club in a few minutes. Because the victim was drifting in and out of consciousness, the first aid squad called for a helicopter to fly her to the hospital. The helicopter met the ambulance in Ship Bottom, NJ (another town on Long Beach Island) and flew her to Atlantic City hospital. She was checked out and released that evening.

As you may know, I am a Level 2 certified sailing instructor (I am the sailing director at Barnegat Bay Yacht Club, Harvey Cedars, NJ) and I found that my instructor experience helped me do the right thing (e.g., determine if she was breathing) as well as remain calm (somewhat) during the incident. The instruction from US SAILING also made clear the importance of wearing a PFD and the fact that we were both wearing PFD's was certainly an important factor in preventing tragedy. It was only after we learned that she was all right did I realize how serious it could have been.

I very much appreciate being considered for a rescue medal. However, I am leaving for Australia before the end of the month to study for the next six months. Thus, I don't know what my schedule will be in terms of being able to schedule any kind of award ceremony. Our Club typically has an awards ceremony shortly after the 4th of July and again on Labor Day. However, because I am not planning on returning from Australia until mid-July, I won't be there for the 4th of July ceremony. Our Club's other awards ceremony is held on Labor Day. Since I will have to return to college (I am currently a junior at Colgate University, Hamilton, NY) before Labor Day, I won't be at that ceremony either. Accordingly, if I am approved for a rescue medal, I would request that you send it directly to me at the above address (it is my parent's home).

The victim requested that her name be withheld for personal reasons.

Sincerely yours,
Steven Wright

**The Arthur B. Hanson Rescue Award was awarded to
Steven Wright and subsequently mailed to him.**