

The Officers, Directors and Members of

US SAILING

are pleased to present the

ARTHUR B. HANSON RESCUE MEDAL

to

ALEX ABELL

FOR THE RESCUE AS FOLLOWS:

Please join us in congratulating Alex Abell, a US SAILING certified dinghy instructor and race instructor at Chicago Yacht Club, for his quick and effective rescue of a student. Here's what happened:

On August 1, 1994, a 15-20 knot day, a group of young sailors from Chicago Yacht Club's junior program were out on Lake Michigan sailing 420's with trapezes and spinnakers. As Alex was setting the pin end of the starting line, he noticed one of his sailors bear away to avoid hitting another boat and in so doing, catch a puff, capsize to windward and turtle, mast down.

Alex immediately headed for the overturned boat. Only the skipper was on top of the boat, and in anticipation his crew would be in the air pocket under the boat, was waiting for her to surface. Alex sensed that something was wrong, as this girl was not the type to play around by staying in the air pocket.

Alex instructed the skipper to lean out between the gunwale and the board while he grabbed the base of the side stay and began to pull up the boat. About half-way up he could see the girl floating vertically about two feet under water. She was tangled in the rigging and was still attached to the trapeze. Alex pulled the boat up until he could reach her. She was limp, unconscious and still attached to the 420 trap wire as he grabbed her around the shoulders and by her PFD, and pulled her into the inflatable. Her 5' 10" frame made the transfer difficult. Alex recalls that her lips were blue and she was not breathing. He cleared her mouth and throat and immediately began CPR. Thankfully, she was revived and within a short time was not only breathing on her own, but was sitting up and requesting to go back out on the water! An ambulance was waiting for them on shore and a visit to the hospital proved her to be none the worse for the wear. She returned to sailing after a day off spent relaxing and recovering from the scare and a slight bump on the head received during the capsizing.

This sailor's father stated in a letter to the Chairman of the Junior Sailing Program at Chicago Yacht Club, "We shudder to think of the consequences had Alex not responded as capably and professionally as he did in this emergency."

Because Alex had First Aid and CPR, along with Level 1 Dinghy Instructor Certification, he knew what to do and did it. This exceptional young man, who began sailing at Chicago Yacht Club at age 13 and grew up through its racing program, is modest when mention of this rescue is made. At completion of the summer sailing season, Alex will return for his third year to the University of Pennsylvania where his major is International Relations and History, with a minor in Economics. And, yes, he races on their

sailing team.

by Ginny Long
Training Director

**Alex received the US SAILING Arthur B. Hanson Rescue Medal for his act of heroism.
We add our hearty congratulations.**