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Three California Crews Awarded Sailing Rescue Medal

The US Sailing Safety at Sea Committee awarded the prestigious Arthur B. Hanson Rescue Medal to three California crews who performed man-overboard rescues during offshore races in 2020 and 2021.

Carolyn Sherman, Sandra Sherman, Brian Fritzges, and Roy Mumma, crew of "Sea Maiden," an Erickson 35; and the crew of "Bolero," a Ranger 33, were recognized for their quick response in saving Mike Dore, who fell overboard during the August 29, 2020 "Stephanie Jean Navirdes Memorial Race Your Own Household" race hosted by the Cortez Racing Association on Northern San Diego Bay.

Len Bose, Peter Heck, Steve Natvig, Chris Vilicich, James Malm, Kenneth Sherb, and Taylor Schlub, crew of the "Oaxaca," were awarded the medal for their quick response in saving John Shulze, the owner of Horizon, a Santa Cruise 50 sloop. Shulze was thrown overboard the evening of May 31, 2021 during the Monterey Yacht Club's Coastal Cup regatta.

The Arthur B. Hanson Rescue Medal is an award given to skippers of pleasure boats or race support vessels who effect rescues of victims from the water. The purposes of the award are to recognize the significant accomplishment in seamanship which has saved a life, and to collect further case studies in rescues for analysis for the US Sailing Safety-at-Sea Committee which will eventually be incorporated into the extensive educational programs of US Sailing.

In the incident involving the crew of "Sea Maiden" and the crew of "Bolero," Mike Dore, a competitor in the Memorial Race, was single handling his Hunter 28.5 "Decoy" and fell overboard when a shackle pin on the lifeline came out when he was putting up the whisker pole.

Mike reported that he locked his helm, and stepped forward to the bow, and reached across the lifeline to set up his whisker pole. When he placed pressure on the lifeline the pin came out. When he went overboard, he hit his shoulder on a stanchion. He was able to hold on to the whisker pole for a short period of time while he was in the water. As he was holding onto the whisker pole, Mike tried to get to the ladder in the back of the boat and release it, but the ladder was secured. He estimated the boat speed was approximately 3.5 - 4.0 knots, making it difficult to hang on as he was being "dragged" by the forward motion of the boat. He eventually had to let go of the whisker pole. Mike was wearing a Type 5 life jacket (inflatable).

The skipper of Sea Maiden, Carolyn Sherman, with crew Sandra Sherman and Brian Fritzges were sailing abeam approximately 3-4 boat lengths away. Skipper and crew saw Mike Dore enter the water and came to his aid. Because Mike was sailing alone, not only was he in the

water, but his boat was sailing unattended toward Harbor Island. Brian Fritzges dove into the bay to assist Mike. Carolyn and Sandra continued sailing toward Mike's boat to get it under control.

As Sea Maiden was able to overtake Decoy, Sandra jumped onto Mike Dore's boat and took control while Sandra returned to Mike and Brian. While Mike and Brian were in the water, Roy Mumma (Bolero) was sailing by and retrieved both individuals out of the water. When Sea Maiden returned to Bolero (Roy Mumma) all parties were transferred to Sea Maiden, then Mike was transferred to his boat and Decoy retired from the race.

In the incident involving the crew of the "Oaxaca" and "Horizon" during the Monterey Yacht Club's Coastal Cup Race, Horizon lost a large lead over competitors with s/v Oaxaca extending a ten-mile lead. Late in the afternoon, Horizon gybed towards the beach while Oaxaca headed out to sea. As the two boats converged on Point Conception it appeared Horizon had taken the lead while holding a speed advantage. The call was to gybe back into the breeze to maintain the advantage.

As the maneuver was being executed, the spinnaker clew made it past the head-stay, however the main had not completed the gybe. Hit by a 25-knot puff, the main sail gybed at the same time the chute filled on the new gybe. Horizon then violently rounded into the wind and Horizon owner Schulze was thrown overboard. The crew quickly got Horizon under control. After several attempts to bring a Lifesling close enough to Schulze by maneuvering the boat, they were finally successful in retrieving him after Steve Natvig donned an inherently buoyant life jacket and swam out to effect Schulze's rescue.

With Santa Barbara the nearest safe harbor three hours away, Schulze was immediately taken below and treated for hypothermia. The Coast Guard was contacted via cell phone and assisted the crew in monitoring Schulze's condition. Upon arrival at Santa Barbara, Schulze was checked by paramedics and, refusing additional treatment, was released and returned home. The crew secured Horizon for the evening and assisted Schulze in returning to his home, where he fully recovered.