

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

C. F. PICKLE

for the rescue as follows:

On May 18, 2003 Ensign owner Tom Fraser, and crew Mike Dodge, Chris Grow and Matt Morman were preparing their boat C.F. Pickle, inside the harbor for the River Challenge in Lake St. Clair, MI when Morman heard calls of distress just outside the breakwall. Morman observed from the pier as the passengers in a fishing boat rushed to the water-filled side to bail their swamped boat, though they should have gone to the opposite side for counterbalance. The boat flipped over, dumping five people into the 2' seas, 15+ miles of wind and cold 56-degree water. The five fishermen had been on board a rented 14-foot aluminum fishing boat.

Morman saw two life jackets peel right off a little boy and a man as they floated right off of them. He knew they needed help. Morman jumped into the water pulling a 39 year-old man to shore with great struggle. Dodge jumped in and pulled a 7 year-old boy to shore. Dodge returned and pulled a 33 year-old man to shore after about 15 minutes from the first yells. Fraser assisted by throwing liferings and lines, and getting the victims from the water level, up the ladders mounted on the seawall to safety. With the low water levels of 2003, the bottom of the ladders were out of the water. Grow and others pulled the victims up the ladder using rope. Grow also called 911 on his cell phone for additional help. At this point, two more victims had submerged and could no longer be seen. The bodies of these two, a 10 year-old boy and 24 year-old man were recovered two days later by authorities.

The United State Coast Guard requested that the race committee abandon the day's racing so they could conduct their investigation and continue recovery efforts. The race committee complied.

Congratulations to Tom Fraser, and crew Mike Dodge, Chris Grow and Matt Morman, for coming to the aid of mariners in peril, in what proved to be fatal conditions taking great risk of personal harm. 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 awarded to the crew of C.F. Pickle at the Detroit Regional Yacht-Racing Association board meeting, by presenter US SAILING Past Vice-President Ted Everingham, on behalf of US SAILING.



Left to right: Jack Morman (accepting for his son, Matt), Tom Fraser, US SAILING Past Vice President Ted Everingham, Mike Dodge, and Chris Grow.
Photograph by Stephen Lirroff

DETAILS:

C.F.Pickle had not left the dock at the time of the rescue. The disaster and rescue occurred prior to the start of the race (which was ultimately canceled at Coast Guard request). The owner and crew were readying their boat when they heard the victims distress cries on the other side of the sea wall from their dockage.

The two C.F. Pickle crew went into the water. The owner was part of the group on the dock pointing, throwing life rings and lines, helping to haul people out of the water. He was undoubtedly one of the first on the scene. I do not know who called for the Coast Guard and Police. The rescue had been completed by the time that the C.G. arrived, if I am not mistaken.

No one was pulled aboard C.F.Pickle, nor were their sails up. I doubt that their engine was started.

If I may clarify the situation further, please let me know. I can talk with some of the others who, like myself, were involved, but not to the extent of those in the water.

Note: The bodies of the other two individuals who were in the boat were eventually found several miles downstream many days later.

Tom Fraser adds:

It was Matt Morman with the 39 year old. Matt got him to the ladder and he couldn't hold on. When Matt let go of him I didn't have the line on him well from above and it slipped off and he went down again. I called to Matt and he returned, pulled him up again and secured the line on him and Chris Grow and several others hauled him up. At the same time I was calling to the Man who rented the boat, I think his name was Ward, to stay with the boat as Mike and Matt were very busy in the water. I threw a life saving horseshoe over the capsized boat and pulled it to him and instructed him how to put it on. After that I Pulled him from the boat to the ladder and Mike Dodge got back in the water to assist him at the ladder. Again we dropped lines to get him up. Chris went down the ladder early in the rescue to receive the child from Mike Dodge. Chris was also the first one on a cell phone to call the police for assistance. After we had the 3 on the dock we realized that there were still 2 missing as the police began to arrive. Bill Kuester, Pat Clark and myself then went aboard Bill's troller to search the area before the coast guard arrived. We searched in vain for about 2 hours until the divers showed up. The first body was found 2 days later right out in front of the park pier and the boy's body was found 7 days later at Grosse Isle. As one last note, Matt's last name is Morman, not Mormon.

Nominators Name: Stephen A. Liroff
Event Name: River Challenge
Sponsoring Yacht Club: Detroit Yacht Club
Date of Event: 5/18/03
Event City: Detroit
Event State: MI
Date of Incident: 5/18/03
Body of Water: Lake St. Clair
First Victims Name: Michael Ward age 39
First Boat Name: rented row boat
First Boat Length: 14 ft.
Second Victims Name: Sergio Stevens age33
Second Boat Name: rented row boat
Second Boat Length: 14 ft.
Third Victims Name: Michael Ward age 7
Third Boat Name: rented row boat
Third Boat Length: 14 ft.
Rescuing Skipper: Tom Fraser
Rescuing1 Boat Name: C.F.Pickle
What was the nature of this incident: see attachment

Did a Mayday call go out: telephone
Who responded: Coast Guard/police/multiple boaters
Was any injury sustained by the victim: hypothermia
Can your story be published: Yes
Can you provide articles about this event: Yes, Detroit Free Press 5/19/03
Was a PFD worn: y
Was this day or night: day
Wind speed: in excess of 15 miles per hour
Wave height: 2 feet
Water temperature: 56
How much time did the victim spend in the water: up to 15 minutes (approximately)
Did the victims boat lose site of the victim: no
Was a rescue swimmer put in the water: y
Did the victim have a strobe light or whistle: n
What color clothes were visible above the water: dark clothing
Was the victim able to help in the recovery: y
Rescuing Crews Names: Mike Dodge: Entered water and pulled victims out Matt Morman: Entered water and pulled victims out. Tom Fraser: assisted from dock
How did victim help himself back onboard: in climbing the ladder
How did the victim get hoisted onto the deck:
Child: hoisted from water to top of retaining wall
Adults: climbed fixed ladder to top of retaining wall with assistance