



# AFRAS *Newsletter*

*Association for Rescue at Sea, Inc.*

PO Box 565 • Fish Creek, WI 54212-0565 • (920) 743-5434 tel & fax • [www.afras.org](http://www.afras.org)

*Autumn 2012*

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## *Letter from the President*

Dear Members and Friends of AFRAS,

The Association for Rescue at Sea is as strong today as at any time in our history. Besides our annual ceremony on Capitol Hill to honor Coast Guard, Coast Guard Auxiliary and Amver participants for their heroic maritime rescues, we have also branched out to honor rescues made by the commercial provider industry and those made by rescue agencies of small island nations within the Caribbean Basin. We are also in strong pursuit of the second leg of our mission – to help support voluntary maritime rescue organizations – with our current focus on fledgling organizations in the Caribbean Basin who can use our assistance.

It was a great honor to witness our annual awards ceremony this past October 4<sup>th</sup>, and I'd be greatly remiss if I failed to make note of the efforts of our AFRAS staff, the Coast Guard SAR program and Coast Guard Congressional Affairs staff for making our annual Awards Ceremony another resounding success! We were honored with the presence and active participation of the Coast Guard Commandant, Admiral Bob Papp, and with Congressman Howard Coble (Captain, USCGR (ret)), who honored us with his presence and kind words of support, while also helping to arrange the use of our ceremonial venue at the Rayburn House Office Building. The heroes are the real story – please check our web-site at [www.AFRAS.org](http://www.AFRAS.org) and access the award citations of those who were honored on October 4<sup>th</sup>, to include: ASMC (now CWO) Randall Rice, the crew of Coast Guard Auxiliary Vessel 25371, and the Amver participant M/V Oleander.

On behalf of our Chairman, VADM Terry Cross, and our Board of Directors, I look forward to the next year, in anticipation of AFRAS making greater strides in our development of social media initiatives, of pushing the envelope in garnering the revenue needed to support voluntary maritime rescue organizations, and in supporting and highlighting the search and rescue mission. I'd like to make note that all we desire to do in furthering AFRAS is only able to be accomplished by standing on the shoulders of the giants who came before us, and with that I'd like to acknowledge the service of Admiral Jim Gracey, our Chairman Emeritus, who has resigned from AFRAS after decades of service. Fair winds and following seas Admiral!

In closing, I want to thank our Corporate Sponsors who underwrite our efforts to recognize heroism at its finest, and, without their help and support we would be hard-pressed to recognize the harrowing deeds of bona fide heroes. My sincere thanks to EADS of North America, to the Lockheed Martin Corporation, to Sea Tow and to the Brunswick Corporation. We are very fortunate to have all four corporate entities onboard with us and I hope we can count on your support again next year.

Captain Steve Sawyer, USCG (ret)



2012

# AFRAS Vice Admiral Thomas R. Sargent III — Gold Medal Award

*Chief Warrant Officer*

**Randall J. Rice**

*United States Coast Guard*



Chief Warrant Officer Randall J. Rice of US Coast Guard Air Station Cape Cod was presented the prestigious AFRAS Vice Admiral Thomas R. Sargent III Gold Medal for his heroic life-saving actions on 10 May 2011 while serving as rescue swimmer aboard Coast Guard Helicopter CG6004.

At approximately noon on said date, Rice and his crew launched from Air Station Cape Cod in response to a distress call received from the 45-foot sailing vessel EVA, located 150 nautical miles southeast of Cape Cod. Pounding seas and gale force winds had ripped the mast off the vessel and shattered the windows endangering the lives of the crew. The surrounding waters and deck were littered with sails, lines and debris.

Arriving at an updated position relayed from a concurrently launched HU-25 Aircraft, and unable to establish communications with the vessel, Rice and his crew conducted a search to locate S/V EVA in the tossing 20-30 foot waves. Rice eventually spotted the vessel and vectored the pilot into position.



*One of the crewmen from EVA thanking Rice and his crew. U.S. Coast Guard Photo*

The aircraft commander initially made the decision not to deploy the rescue swimmer due to numerous hazards in the water, but after further assessment it was determined that deployment was required in order to save the two crewmen – one having sustained a back injury. Chief Warrant Officer Rice entered the water, maneuvered through the 30-foot swells and debris to the vessel and climbed aboard. He quickly cleared the deck of rubble and prepared for two basket hoists of the crew. He meticulously executed each hoist from the deck of EVA as the thrashing waves and raging winds battered the vessel. His swift actions were instrumental in the saving of two lives.

Chief Warrant Officer Rice's courage, judgment, and devotion to duty are most heartily commended and are in keeping with the highest traditions of the United States Coast Guard.

*From left to right Petty Officer 2nd Class Alejandro Delgado, Chief Petty Officer Randall Rice, Lt. Cmdr. Brian Hopkins and Lt. j.g. Andrew Lund, stand for a photo after rescuing the two men from EVA. U.S. Coast Guard photo.*





# AFRAS Silver Medal Award

# 2012



**Ronald Johnson**  
**Dennis Szeba**  
**Jim Mauk**  
**Bill Gerdson**  
**Frank Jelinek**

*United States Coast Guard Auxiliary*

An AFRAS Silver Medal was awarded to US Coast Guard Auxiliarists Ronald Johnson, Dennis Szeba, Jim Mauk, Bill Gerdson, and Fred Jelinek for their outstanding operational skill while serving aboard Auxiliary Facility VALROSE II on 30 June, 2011.

While underway conducting man overboard training, the Auxiliary crew noticed a woman frantically waving her hands while her small boat was circling. The operator of the boat was slumped over the helm in obvious medical distress. Auxiliarist Johnson, serving as coxswain, sprang into action and skillfully maneuvered the Auxiliary vessel alongside the out of control boat to get it under control and further assess the situation.

Once alongside, Auxiliarists Jelinek and Gerdson boarded the boat and immediately determined the operator was in cardiac arrest. They quickly started CPR while Auxiliarists Johnson, Mauk and Szeba rigged the small boat for alongside tow and coordinated additional assistance with Coast Guard Station Emerald Isle and local EMS.



*Auxiliarist Ronald Johnson addresses the group.  
U.S. Coast Guard Photo*

The Auxiliary team continued CPR as they towed the boat toward shore while the station dispatched one of its rescue boats to assist. Upon rendezvousing, the station and auxiliary teams continued all attempts to revive the boater until they reached the pier and the rescue team successfully employed an Automatic Emergency Defibrillator restarting the boater's heart. The boater was stabilized and transferred to local EMS.

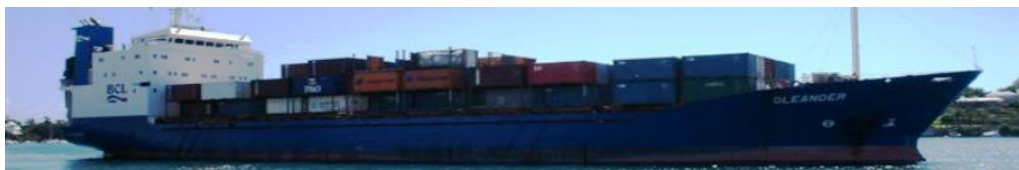
The fast action, perseverance, and devotion to duty displayed by Auxiliarists Ronald Johnson, Dennis Szeba, Jim Mauk, Bill Gerdson, and Fred Jelinek proved critical to saving the boater's life and resulted in his full recovery from the events of that June afternoon.

*Photo top: (l-r) AFRAS Chairman VADM Terry Cross, USCG (ret); USCG Auxiliary National Commodore James Vass; USCG Auxiliarists Jim Mauk, Ronald Johnson, Dennis Szeba, Bill Gerdson and Fred Jelinek; ADM Robert Papp, Commandant USCG. (USCG Photo)*

*Auxiliarists, Coast Guard and EMS personnel work on the victim. Photo Credit Dennis Szeba.*



# 2012 AFRAS Amver Award



## M/V Oleander (Marshall Islands)

*Container Ship Management Ltd (Bermuda)*

AFRAS presented its Amver Plaque to the captain and crew of M/V OLEANDER, a Marshall Islands flagged container ship managed by Container Ship Management Ltd out of Bermuda for the rescue of four sailors on November 6, 2011.



The Elle, a 46-foot sailing yacht, was participating in the North American Rally to the Caribbean, from Newport to Bermuda, when they encountered gale force winds greater than 40 knots and 30 foot seas. Their sailboat lost all steering and was helplessly adrift in the gale.

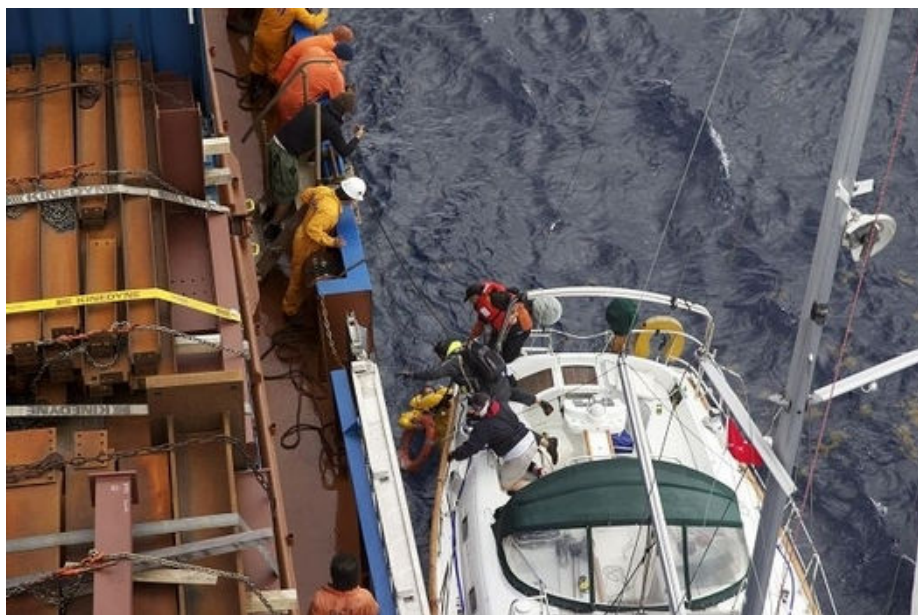
Rescue authorities in Bermuda received the initial distress call and US Coast Guard rescue personnel agreed to assist in the search and rescue case. The Marshall Island flagged ship, on a voyage to Bermuda, was near the Elle and Captain Jurszo agreed to divert to assist the sailboat. Captain Jurszo expertly maneuvered the Oleander next to the sailing vessel avoiding the mast that was wildly swinging near his outside steering station.

When one of the sailors lost balance and plunged into the ocean, the crew of Oleander reacted quickly, threw him a line which he tied to his safety harness, and hauled him back over the side. All four sailors were successfully transferred from Elle to the container ship in the difficult conditions and then cared for by the crew.

The Automated Mutual Assistance Vessel Rescue System (Amver), sponsored by the United States Coast Guard, is a unique, computer-based, and voluntary global ship reporting system used worldwide by search and rescue authorities to arrange for assistance to persons in distress at sea. AFRAS commends the expert actions of the captain and crew of OLEANDER for their role in this dramatic rescue.

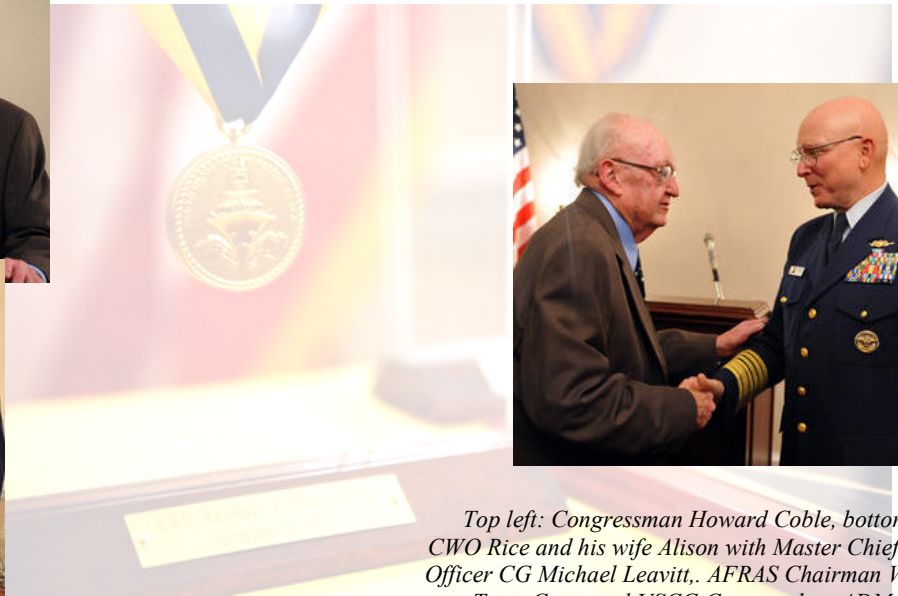


*Mr. Blair Simmons, VP – Vessel Operations accepts the award on behalf of OLEANDER. Adm Robert Papp, USCG Commandant and Vadm Terry Cross, USCG (ret.) present the award. (Photo courtesy US Coast Guard)*



*The crew on board the 46ft sailboat Elle get rescued by the container ship Oleander. (Photo by Christopher Melrose featured in RoyalGazette online)*





Top left: Congressman Howard Coble, bottom left: CWO Rice and his wife Alison with Master Chief Petty Officer CG Michael Leavitt, AFRAS Chairman VADM Terry Cross and USCG Commandant ADM Papp.  
Photos courtesy US Coast Guard.

## Thank you to our 2012 Corporate Sponsors

*Platinum*

**EADS**  
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*We never forget who we're working for™*



*Silver*





# AFRAS/C-PORT Lifesaving Award



*Steve Sawyer, President of AFRAS and retired Captain USCG Office of Search and Rescue along with Jim Misiongale and Captain Jon Gridley. WRDW-TV*

## Sea Tow Clarks Hill Lake Captain Jon G. Gridley

is cited “for life saving efforts” for his performance of duty on the afternoon of the 4<sup>th</sup> of July, 2011. While seeking safe harbor from an intense thunderstorm which produced winds in excess of 50 knots and a three to four foot choppy sea state, Captain Gridley responded to a distress call from a houseboat caught in the storm out on the lake.

Captain Gridley was alerted that there were people in the water and in distress. Not concerned for their own safety, Captain Gridley and a friend immediately got underway in the howling wind and tough sea conditions to render assistance.

Once on scene with the houseboat, Captain Gridley learned that after a 12 year old boy (wearing a life jacket) was blown overboard by the wind, an adult male jumped off the houseboat into the water without a life jacket in an effort to save the boy, who subsequently was recovered in good health. When Gridley quickly located the missing adult male, he was found unconscious and about to submerge below the surface of the water.

After pulling the man aboard his vessel, Captain Gridley quickly headed back to the marina while his friend performed CPR. The victim was delivered to the dock, where he was revived and transferred to awaiting Emergency Medical Services. Captain Gridley’s cool composure and speedy actions no doubt directly contributed to saving the life of a fellow boater.



Captain Jon G. Gridley is commended for outstanding performance of duty, going above and beyond to save a life, and bringing great credit to the marine assistance industry.

## Admiral James Gracey USCG (Ret.)

### Retires from AFRAS Board

*Chairman (1997-2003) Chairman Emeritus (2003-2012)*



***AFRAS thanks ADM Gracey for his many years of service and outstanding support of the organization.***

# 2012 AFRAS CAR-SAR Award

(Caribbean Search and Rescue)



***The AFRAS Car-Sar Award was presented to Bahamas Air-Sea and Rescue (BASRA) Abaco for their heroic efforts on November 7th, 2011 in the rescue attempt of six crewmembers aboard the Fishing Vessel HIDE OUT.***

On the early morning hours of that fateful day, the F/V HIDE OUT attempted to negotiate the Man-O-War passage despite the torrential seas hammering the Abaco coastline. Immediately upon approaching the channel, HIDE OUT encountered breaking surf conditions with 12-15 foot waves toppling over the undersized 42 foot boat. Before the crew could issue a distress call, all six persons were thrown into the water as the fishing vessel quickly sank. Miraculously, a crewmember was able to make a mobile phone call while clinging to a raft.

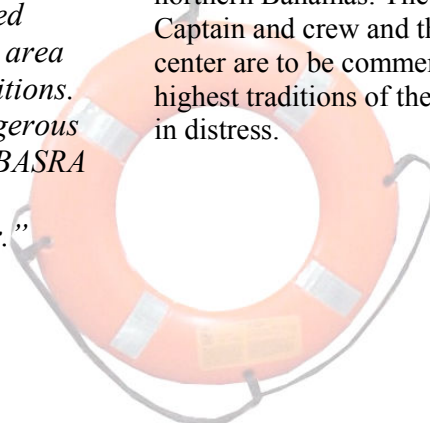
Within minutes of the BASRA operations center receiving the distress alert, Clay Wilhoyte and his oldest son, Andrew, were dispatched from nearby Hope Town in BASRA's 26 foot rigid hull inflatable boat (RHIB). On scene, the BASRA team maneuvered among dangerous coral heads and breaking seas to rescue four of HIDE OUT's six crewmembers.

A U.S. Coast Guard helicopter was launched to help with the rescue efforts and arrived just as BASRA recovered the fifth fisherman, now deceased. The MH-60 pilot, Lt Commander Bill Friday remarked: *"With the Coast Guard helicopter located over 45 minutes away, BASRA's Rescue Boat Captain Clay Wilhoyte's selfless actions are the reason four people are alive today. By the time the USCG helicopter arrived, BASRA had already saturated the immediate scene of the capsized sport fishing vessel, and provided recommendations to us to expand the search area based on local knowledge and weather conditions. The rescue efforts were compounded by dangerous seas breaking over the reef, threatening the BASRA vessel with its own peril as it continued the unsuccessful search of the final crewmember."*

The BASRA RHIB continued searching for the sixth missing crewmember despite suffering extensive damage in the initial rescue of the four survivors; sustaining repeated impact from breaking waves that caused the center console to partially separate from the deck and the transom's hydraulic engine lift to malfunction. The sixth crewmember was never located during the exhaustive search efforts that followed.

A volunteer SAR organization formed in 1960, BASRA has responded to thousands of maritime distress calls since inception. Through rescue cases similar to the ones highlighted here, BASRA Abaco and its dedicated team of volunteers continue to selflessly serve the public, saving countless lives of residents and visitors to the northern Bahamas. The lifesaving actions of BASRA's Captain and crew and the coordination of their operations center are to be commended and are in keeping with the highest traditions of the maritime community to aid others in distress.

*"...BASRA's  
Rescue Boat  
Captain Clay  
Wilhoyte's  
selfless actions  
are the reason  
four people  
are alive  
today."*



# *AFRAS welcomes new Directors*

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## ***John C. Cooper***

John's interest in boating and boating safety began while an undergraduate at UCLA, when he obtained his 25 ton Master's ticket on his 18<sup>th</sup> birthday in order to pay his way through college running fishing boats in Long Beach/San Pedro. Since then, he has owned a number of boats in the various countries where he has lived and worked as an international banker.

During the last ten years, he has served the US Coast Guard Auxiliary as National Director of Marine Safety and Environmental Protection and, most recently, as National Director for International Affairs. It was at one of the Caribbean SAR conferences conducted by the International Affairs Department held in Puerto Rico, that AFRAS announced the creation of the AFRAS CAR-SAR Award for the outstanding SAR operation conducted in the Caribbean each year – much like the Gold and Silver medals and the AMVER Award which are presented annually by AFRAS.

John is married to Bernie Cooper and lives in Islamorada, the Florida Keys, after a career in banking in Asunción, Paraguay; Córdoba and Buenos Aires, Argentina; Singapore; San Juan, Puerto Rico; London and New York.

## ***Wayne Spivak***

As the creator of the AFRAS website, Wayne brings much experience to the board in information technologies. He is a member of the Coast Guard Auxiliary and has managed their Internet Presence as well as provided counsel on technological solutions to the management of this 30,000+ volunteer force. Wayne is also the Chief Information Officer for the United Safe Boating Institute and the Public Affairs Officer for the U.S. Naval Sea Cadets and Naval Sea Cadet Corps. He is a consultant for the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey and the Program Director and Chief Instructor of the Small Boat Course for Local Law Enforcement. Wayne is also a freelance writer and contributing editor for various magazines.



As President of SBA Consulting Ltd., Wayne Spivak enables companies to expand by adding value through new and innovative ways of modernizing systems. Wayne lives in New York, NY and enjoys Ham Radio, boating, travel, public service and emergency management.



## ***RADM James Van Sice, USCG (Ret.)***

Jim Van Sice is the Director of Homeland Security Business Development for EADS-NA. He previously served in the United States Coast Guard where he achieved the Rank of Rear Admiral. His flag assignments included Deputy Director of Operations at United States Northern Command, Director of Reserve and Training for the Coast Guard and Superintendent of the United States Coast Guard Academy.

Jim was a career aviator and commanded the Coast Guard Air Station in Borinquen Puerto Rico. He has a Master of Science in Engineering from Purdue University, a Master of Arts from Webster College and a Bachelor of Science from the United States Coast Guard Academy.

RADM Van Sice is married to Clarke Hutchinson and lives in Annapolis, Maryland. They have two children.



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## ***RADM James C. Olson, USCG (Ret.)***

During his military career in the U.S. Coast Guard, Rear Admiral Olson was a distinguished aviator, flying over 5500 hours in Sikorsky rescue helicopters for the U.S. Coast Guard. He was involved in hundreds of rescues while saving and assisting mariners in many extreme circumstances. He served at Coast Guard Air Stations all across the U.S., and spent 12 years of his career in Alaska, one of the world's harshest flying environments.



RADM Olson retired from the US Coast Guard in 2006 where he served as Commander of the USCG District Seventeen (Juneau, Alaska). His other Flag tours included Director of Operations Capability, CG Headquarters where he was responsible for planning, budgeting, and policy implementation for all Coast Guard cutters, aircraft, boats and command and control systems. During this time he was part of the original Department of Homeland Security implementation team. Earlier he was the Director of the Joint Inter Agency Task Force West in Alameda, CA.

Rear Admiral Olson is currently the Senior Director for DHS and Maritime Programs with MacAulay-Brown, Inc. He is a graduate of the Harvard Program for Senior Executives in National and International Security, the Flag and General Officer CAPSTONE Course, the Air War College and the U.S. Army Flight Safety Officer Course. He has a BS degree from the U.S. Coast Guard Academy and a Masters of Business Administration from Adelphi University. He serves on several boards including the Coast Guard Foundation Board of Trustees.



## ***COMO Thomas C. Mallison, National Commodore, USCG Auxiliary***

Commodore Thomas C. Mallison is currently serving as National Commodore. He previously served as Vice National Commodore in 2011-2012, as Deputy National Commodore - Operations Policy and Atlantic Area West in 2009-2010, as District Commodore, Eighth District Eastern Region in 2007-08, as District Vice Commodore in 2005-06, and as District Rear Commodore West in 2003-04. He served as Department Chief of the National Department of Personnel in 2000-02.

He graduated from the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, NY with a Bachelor of Science degree in Mathematics and Science. He graduated With Honors from the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College. He holds a Ph.D. in Business Administration.

Commodore Mallison joined the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary in 1990. He has a wide variety of experiences in both elected and staff offices at all levels from flotilla to National. He is qualified as Boat Crew Coxswain, PATON Verifier, RBS Visitor, Vessel Examiner, Instructor, Telecommunications Operator and Qualification Examiner. He is also an AUXOP member.

He retired as Vice President and Director of Administration with Systran Corporation in Dayton, Ohio. During his business career, he served on the Boards of Directors of three manufacturing companies and a nonprofit corporation in the medical sector.

Commodore Mallison served in the U.S. Army both as a commissioned officer and as a non-commissioned officer, and retired with twenty years of service. Overseas tours included Germany, Korea and Vietnam. Commodore Mallison and his wife, Wanda, reside in Bear Lake, Michigan.

## Join AFRAS

AFRAS is here to provide you with a means of supporting worldwide voluntary lifeboat services and at the same time, providing you with a tax deduction here in the United States.

### ***AFRAS offers two basic membership packages:***

The first, a joint membership with the Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI) for dues of \$100 per year will provide you with a quarterly subscription to the RNLI's *Lifeboat* journal, their annual *Watermark* catalogue and other RNLI press releases and mailings throughout the year. We will also send you periodic AFRAS newsletters, press releases, and an invitation to our annual Gold Medal/Silver Medal/Amver award ceremony in Washington, D.C.

The second, a sole AFRAS membership for \$20 per year will entitle you to all AFRAS mailings including newsletters, press releases and miscellaneous information from our counterparts throughout the world.

***All dues and donations given through AFRAS are tax deductible in the United States.***

If you are interested in joining AFRAS please fill out the information below and send along with your dues/donation to  
*Association for Rescue at Sea, Inc., P. O. Box 565, Fish Creek, WI 54212-0565.*

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Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ (day) \_\_\_\_\_ (evening) E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Membership (check one) \_\_\_\_\_ AFRAS/RNLI (\$100 dues) \_\_\_\_\_ AFRAS (\$20 dues)

Dues enclosed \_\_\_\_\_ (amount) Donation enclosed \_\_\_\_\_ (amount)

I would like to find out more about AFRAS. Please send me more information.

***Have you considered AFRAS  
in your estate planning?***

