

imPULSE

A Periodic Newsletter of the Carnegie Hero Fund Commission ISSUE 16 • DECEMBER 2008



CARNEGIE HERO FUND TO GET NEW ADDRESS

Hero Fund offices have a new home in Pittsburgh effective Dec. 1:

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Our new home is just across the street from the old one and is on the 11th floor of the Koppers Building (pictured), home of Koppers, Inc., a global chemical and materials company. The 34-story skyscraper was built in the late 1920s of Indiana limestone and is one of the best examples of the "Art Deco" style in Pittsburgh. The city has been the Hero Fund's home since the organization was founded in 1904 by Andrew Carnegie.

FATHER'S HEROISM PROUDLY RECALLED

In 1959, Hortense Oschal of Exeter, Pa., nominated her father, Amedeo Pancotti, for the Carnegie Medal for helping to save his fellow miners from a flooded coalmine near Scranton, Pa. Fifty years later, she remains proud of the award—and of her father. See *From the Archives*, p. 9.



Mr. Squicimari

Hero's drowning death prompted family to start educational foundation

Olga Giner of Miami, Fla., knows too well of the dangers of ocean rip currents. Her son and only child, Giancarlo Squicimari, fell victim to one on May 27, 2007, while attempting to save a 12-year-old girl from drowning in the Atlantic Ocean at Palm Beach, Fla. Squicimari was 31 and would have been married six months later. He was posthumously awarded the Carnegie Medal earlier this year.

"While we are proud of his unselfish act," Giner said, "this horrible accident could have been avoided if lifeguards and appropriate warnings were available to alert the public to the dangerous ocean conditions that existed that day."

For that reason, and to keep her son's memory alive, Giner established the Giancarlo Squicimari Foundation, using Hero Fund grant monies in the start up. The foundation believes that the use of lifeguards should be the first means of drowning prevention and that signs, alerting the public to both the dangers of rip currents and the daily water conditions, need to be placed on all beaches, public and private.

The greater safety precaution, the foundation believes, is to educate the public about rip currents and to urge swimmers to use only beaches with lifeguards. To get that

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LASTING HONORS

By Mark Laskow, President Carnegie Hero Fund Commission



Hero Fund staffers routinely accommodate inquiries from Carnegie Medal awardees and their families. The inquiries are diverse, but all seem to reflect a certain degree of pride on the part of the correspondent in

owning the medal or being related to a Carnegie hero.

A 1971 awardee wrote to see if her medal could be re-struck to give her new married name, even though the marriage took place several years later. "My concern is for my son who is in awe of both the foundation and my medal," she wrote. We told her the medal represents a snapshot of an event that occurred at a specific place and time and that the facts must remain as they were in 1971. "Now that I have the explanation I agree totally," she replied.

A surprise may have been found in our response to the daughter of a posthumous awardee from the mid-1980s. The medal was given to the hero's widow and infant son, whom we understood to be his only family. The daughter, from a previous relationship, came to our attention when she asked for documentation of the award. Our reply mentioned that a posthumous awardee's children are eligible for tuition aid. As it turned out, the daughter was attending school and expressed a need for such help.

Another surprise may have been in our response to the great-niece of awardee Thomas Conroy, a Niagara Falls, N.Y., city fireman who helped to rescue a man from the brink of the falls in 1906. Doing genealogical research, she asked if we had a file on the case, and we supplied her what we could, including a contemporary photo of the scene. So graphic and poignant is the photo—it bears century-old markings by fountain pen to indicate figuring points in the rescue—that we used it as the cover of our centennial book, "A Century of Heroes," in 2004 (available through the website).

John M. Gammill of Key West, Fla., is a son of awardee William P. Gammill, now 80, who was given the medal for his rescue efforts following an explosion in an atomic reactor in 1961. Informing that his father's medal could be passed down to only one of five sons, Gammill was requesting a parchment certificate for each. "My father has always been a hero to me," this proud son wrote. "He has also lived up to the medal he was awarded so many years ago."

From Thurso to Cork: After 100 years, Carnegie's U.K. hero fund going strong

Newest in the "century club" from among Andrew Carnegie's 22 trusts and institutions is his U.K.-based hero fund, established in 1908 following the early successes of its U.S. counterpart, the Carnegie Hero Fund Commission. The Commission celebrated its centennial in 2004.

"I got an idea this morning in bed listening to the organ," Carnegie wrote on Sunday, Dec. 29, 1907, to Charles Taylor, the Commission's first president. "Why not extend the Hero Fund to my native land, Britain and Ireland; ask the Dunfermline trust to take charge of it." He ended the missive with, "P.S. I'm very happy over this revelation this morning."

On the following Sept. 21, Carnegie established the U.K.

trust in more formal terms, writing from Skibo, his castle in the Highlands of Scotland, and he endowed it with \$1.25 million. The terms were accepted by the board of the Carnegie Dunfermline Trust on Oct. 1, and the Carnegie Hero Fund Trust came into being. The Dunfermline Trust had been established five years earlier to "add value to the lives of the people of Dunfermline," where Carnegie was born in 1835 to humble circumstance.

Two days after Carnegie penned his wishes, workman Thomas Wright died attempting to save a coworker from suffocating in poisonous fumes in Edinburgh, not far from Dunfermline. He urged his new trust to consider the case and investigate the personal affairs of Wright's widow and children, seeing them as potentially "the first wards of the fund." Wright became the posthumous recipient of the trust's first medal, its highest honor (pictured).

Still operating from headquarters in Dunfermline, the hero trust has one mission: To recognize the heroism of ordinary people who risk their lives to help others. The trust gives financial assistance where necessary to civilians who have been injured, or to the dependents of people who have been killed, attempting to save another human life. Its geographic scope is the whole of Great Britain, Ireland, and the Channel Islands—"from Thurso (in northern Scotland) to Cork (in western Ireland)."

The trust makes two awards, a certificate and the medal. The medal is reserved for outstanding acts of heroism, usually involving repeated or sustained endeavor, and to date only 174 have been awarded. Once a case is selected for recognition, the name of the hero is added to a "roll of honour," a beautifully inscribed set of volumes kept on display at the Andrew Carnegie Birthplace Museum, which includes the stone cottage in which Carnegie was born. It is a powerful experience viewing the roll, as it holds more than 6,000 names, many of persons who lost their lives in behalf of others. The early pages of the roll detail mining accidents, runaway horses, and wartime bombing raids, exhibiting a rapidly changing history.

A financial grant is also made in each case, and trustees consider giving continued financial assistance to the rescuer or the rescuer's family. As the trustees are aware that



The obverse of the U.K. hero fund's medal includes an angel as messenger of light and a man whose winged feet represent swiftness in the service of others. Around the rim is one of Carnegie's favorite quotations, "He serves God best who most nobly serves humanity."

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GRAVE MARKER INSTALLED

Ray Dicks, caretaker of Slippery Rock Cemetery in Elwood City, Pa., mounts a bronze grave marker on the crypt of Carnegie Medal awardee Dominick Fanno. Fanno was awarded the medal for his actions of August 12, 1918, by which he saved two boys from drowning in a creek in Zelienople, Pa., where he lived. A poor swimmer, Fanno, then 40, was rendered unconscious in the rescue. He died in 1971 at age 92. His son Charles, of Chula Vista, Calif., made arrangements for the installation of the medallion, which the Hero Fund makes available to the families of deceased awardees (see page 9).



TO THE HERO FUND

INCISIVE DEFINITION

A few weeks ago I received a copy of your book, "A Century of Heroes." I'm enjoying reading it. The profile of an investigator was interesting on its own, but being involved in mishap investigations I found the thinking process described familiar. I also liked reading about what motivates altruistic acts. The feelings of responsibility described pertain to proper attitudes for reducing the chances of mishaps.

What I liked most was Mr. Carnegie's definition of a hero. I think it's very incisive and hopefully your foundation's work will carry that message to others.

Israel Greenfeld, Cleveland, Ohio

(Copies of the Hero Fund's 240-page centennial book are available by calling the office, toll free at 1-800-447-8900, or by emailing, carnegiehero@carnegiehero.org.)

U.K. hero fund

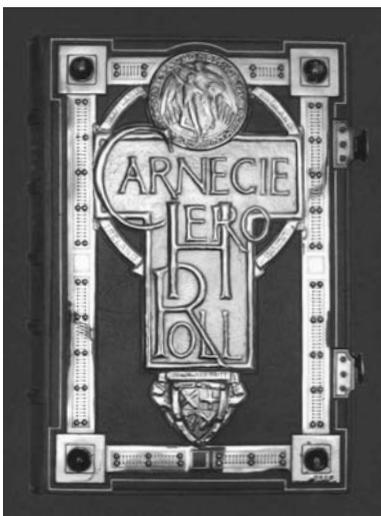
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Carnegie intended more than money for the heroes, they attempt to build a personal relationship with award recipients. The care extended to any one beneficiary will last as long as it is needed and has on occasion continued for up to 60 years. The trust is currently involved with about 120 families and makes grants of about \$164,000 annually.

"We have been constantly inspired by these heroes and their families," said Nora Rundell, the fund's chief executive. "We would like to continue to give aid where a heroic act has brought misfortune to the rescuer or the rescuer's family and are eager to further Andrew Carnegie's legacy 100 years on. We owe it to his memory."

To mark the centennial, Rundell said that her board made "a very conscious decision" not to hold an event but to award a supplementary grant to the beneficiaries, along with an engraved crystal memento. "The feedback we are receiving following the receipt of these is both humbling and affirming," she said.

The remaining nine of Carnegie's 11 hero funds will reach their century marks within the next few years. Following the establishment of the U.S. and U.K. funds, he endowed similar trusts in France, 1909; Germany, 1910; and Belgium, Denmark, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, and Switzerland, all 1911. 



Cover, pages from the Roll of Honour

GOLD MEDALIST

The first gold medal awarded by Carnegie's newly resurrected German hero fund, the *Carnegiestiftung fuer Lebensretter* of Karlsruhe, Germany, was given in October to Bruno Mezec of Stolzenhain, in the former East Germany. Mezec, left, an archeologist from England, was cited for saving his neighbor, Peter Naumann, right, from his burning apartment in early 2007. A trained diver, Mezec, 47, used his diving equipment in the rescue, in which he crawled into

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the burning building, pulled Naumann outside, and then gave him oxygen from his mask. Naumann, 49, sustained third-degree burns but has recovered. Founded in 1910 but becoming defunct in Germany's post-war years, the hero fund was re-instituted in 2006 under the leadership of a private citizen, Andreas Huber, who serves as president.



LATEST AWARDEES
OF THE CARNEGIE MEDAL

SINCE THE LAST ISSUE OF *impULSE*, THE FOLLOWING 25 INDIVIDUALS HAVE BEEN AWARDED THE CARNEGIE MEDAL, BRINGING THE TOTAL NUMBER OF RECIPIENTS TO 9,224 SINCE THE HERO FUND'S INCEPTION IN 1904. THE LATEST AWARDS, WHICH WERE ANNOUNCED ON OCT. 2, ARE DETAILED ON THE COMMISSION'S WEBSITE AT WWW.CARNEGIEHERO.ORG. THE NEXT ANNOUNCEMENT OF AWARDEES WILL BE MADE ON DEC. 22.

Joshua E. Huffman, 32, a construction project manager from Pandora, Ohio, saved Seth L. Boroff, 11, and helped to save Judith A. Garrison, 61, from drowning in a flooded field near his home on Aug. 21, 2007. Seth and Garrison escaped from a car after it was washed from a flooded roadway into the low-lying field. Garrison held to the car, but Seth was washed to a point nearly opposite Huffman's house. Huffman swam out about 150 feet to Seth and took him to higher ground. He then ran about 250 feet to a point opposite Garrison, who was struggling to stay afloat, the car having submerged by then. Although tired, he swam to Garrison and supported her until firefighters soon rescued them by boat.

Oklahoma Highway Patrol troopers **Brian Scott Sturgill** and **Joseph Edward Howard** teamed up with Kingfisher, Okla., Fire Chief **Randy Poindexter** to save Bernice A. and LeRoy F. Krittenbrink from drowning in flooded farmland near Kingfisher on Aug. 19, 2007. The pickup truck containing Bernice, 66, and her husband, LeRoy, 72, was washed into an expanse of farmland that was flooded by rain from a tropical storm. It remained afloat for at least an hour, during which the couple escaped to the bed of the truck. Sturgill, 41, of Harrah, Okla., piloted a highway patrol helicopter to the scene, accompanied by co-pilot Howard, 34, of Shawnee, Okla., and Poindexter, 33, of Kingfisher. Under Howard's direction, Sturgill took the helicopter to the water surface as Poindexter, sitting unsecured on one of the landing skids, grasped Bernice. With difficulty, they lifted her to higher ground and then returned to the scene. They removed LeRoy from the flooded area in a similar fashion.

Ronald Thomas, 56, a sub-assembler and welder from Wellsville, N.Y., died attempting to save Daniel G. Allen from drowning in the Genesee River at Wellsville on April 29 of last year. Daniel, 16, and his father were fishing from atop a man-made waterfall that spanned the river when the father toppled into the boil of water at the base of the falls. Attempting to help him, Daniel also fell into the water. Thomas,

who had been fishing nearby, extended his fishing pole toward Daniel but then fell into the boil himself. Daniel and his father became free of the turbulent water and were aided by others to the bank. Thomas was removed from the river but could not be revived.

Walter M. Beresford, 57, of Belleville, N.J., rescued Frances M. Greene, 70, from her burning house in Irvington, N.J., on April 13, 2006. Greene was on the second floor of the two-story house after fire erupted in a bedroom on that floor. From nearby, Beresford, a fire captain for another municipality, ran to the house and forced entry through the front door. Going to the second floor, he heard Greene calling for help. After crawling into the burning bedroom and finding Greene on the floor, Beresford dragged her to the top of the stairs and then started down with her. Arriving firefighters helped move Greene away from the structure as flames spread throughout the second floor. Both Greene and Beresford required hospital treatment for second-degree burns.

Raymond J. Knepper rescued Louis A. Michaels from a burning house in Niles, Ohio, on May 20 of last year. Michaels, 43, was inside his one-story house after a natural gas explosion there set fire to it. At his nearby home, Knepper, 53, a machine operator, learned of the fire. He responded to the scene, forced open the house's back door, and entered. Despite intense heat and dense smoke, Knepper crawled into the house and found Michaels, who was badly burned, lying on the floor of a room that was starting to burn. Knepper

pulled Michaels to his feet and guided him to the back door and outside.

Steven J. Gies, 43, an electronics technician from Petaluma, Calif., helped to rescue a neighbor, Cathy M. Rappa, 49, from her burning apartment on Aug. 16 of last year. Rappa lay unconscious on the floor of her second-story apartment after fire broke out in the unit's bedroom. Gies responded to the apartment, entered, and crawled through dense smoke to where Rappa lay. He grasped her by the legs and dragged her toward the door, flames by then breaching the windows near the door. Another man entered the apartment and helped Gies drag her to safety. Rappa died two days later. (See photo.)

Scranton, Pa., police officer **Timothy Charles**, 28, rescued Helen L. Lashinski, 81, from her burning house in Scranton on Aug. 3, 2007. Lashinski, 81, was on the second floor of her house after fire broke out at night in the kitchen and engulfed that room. On duty, Charles responded to the house and gained access through its front door. Hearing Lashinski call for help, he crawled through an entry to the foot of the stairway, which was adjacent to the kitchen. He found Lashinski near the top of the stairs and, grasping her about the chest, carried her downstairs, flames spreading from the kitchen doorway to the stairwell. Lashinski was hospitalized for treatment of smoke inhalation and burns, and Charles recovered from smoke inhalation.

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Flames consumed the bedroom and broke through its windows as Steven J. Gies helped to save his neighbor from her burning second-floor apartment in Petaluma, Calif. Gies is shown kneeling over the victim at the entrance to the apartment. (Photo by Nina Zhitov/www.ninazhito.com.)

LATEST AWARDEES*(continued from page 4)*

Craig L. Wenner, 50, of Brookville, Ohio, died attempting to save his wife Patricia S., also 50, from drowning in the Stillwater River at Englewood, Ohio, on Dec. 25, 2006. In an attempt to free her family's dog from the churning water at the base of a low-head dam, Patricia fell into the river at the edge of the dam and became caught in the rough water. Craig, a project manager who was a skilled swimmer, immediately entered the river at the dam and reached her, but they soon submerged. Emergency responders, including divers, searched for the couple, but their bodies were not immediately recovered from the river.

Keavy Joseph Neff, 44, a carpenter from Spokane, Wash., helped to save a 23-year-old man from drowning in the Spokane River on April 25, 2007. The man entered the river and was swept several hundred feet downstream by a very swift current. Shouting for help, he was heard by Neff, who lived near the river. Neff pursued the man on foot and then on his bicycle. At an accessible point on the bank ahead of the man's course, Neff dived into the river despite a water temperature in the 40s. He swam out to intercept the man about 30 feet from the bank and then, establishing a hold on him, began to swim back in. Firefighters who had responded threw a line to them and pulled them to safety.

William Dean Basler, now of Las Vegas, Nev., rescued friends Kristy A. Dudley, 26, and Stacey L. Taylor, 28, from a runaway carriage in Indianapolis, Ind., on April 8, 2007. Sightseeing, the women were passengers inside a closed carriage that was being pulled by a horse on a six-lane city street. A van struck the carriage from behind, sending its driver to the pavement. Spooked, the horse continued, at a trot, causing the carriage to lurch. Basler, 19, witnessed the accident. As the carriage approached him, he climbed onto its side and then forward to its bench. He seized the reins and pulled, stopping the horse at a point about 600 feet beyond where he had boarded the carriage.

Clayton A. Boucher, 44, an electronics technician from Remsen, N.Y., helped to save Lyle M. Robison, 67, from an overturned and burning car after an accident in Holland Patent, N.Y., last year, on July 10. Unconscious, Robison remained in the driver's seat of the car, which, lying on its passenger side in a ditch, caught fire in its engine compartment. Arriving at the scene to learn that the vehicle was occupied, Boucher broke out its rear window with a rock and stepped inside. He lifted Robison up to the driver's door, where others who had opened the door pulled Robison from the car and took him to safety. Boucher stepped to



When Atty. Jeffrey S. Bass, left, went fishing with guide James Christopher Koch off Key Largo, Fla., last year, they caught more than fish. The men pulled the victim of a boating accident aboard their craft, having to dodge the victim's out-of-control boat as it circled them.

safety through the rear window of the car less than a minute before flames intensified to enter it.

James Christopher Koch, 39, a fishing guide from Homestead, Fla., and his client **Jeffrey S. Bass**, 40, an attorney from Miami, Fla., saved Norberto Martinez, 67, from being struck by a boat in the Atlantic Ocean off Key Largo, Fla., on Sept. 29 of last year. Martinez was thrown from his 18-foot boat when it struck a channel marker. The boat then continued in circles around him, striking him and inflicting severe injury. When Koch and Bass approached the scene in Koch's smaller, lightweight boat, they saw the out-of-control boat circling Martinez, who was floating face down and inert. Koch maneuvered his boat to Martinez, and, lying on the exposed deck at the bow, Bass reached down and secured a hold on him. Koch then backed his boat from the path of the circling one to a point of safety. He helped Bass lift Martinez aboard and then took him to shore. (See photo.)

Scott Leland McGrain, 32, a police officer from Horseheads, N.Y., rescued Andrew M. Peterson, 12, from among burning debris of his family's demolished house after a natural gas explosion on Dec. 10, 2005. Andrew was asleep in the one-story house when the massive explosion leveled it, throwing its occupants outside. Unconscious and badly injured, he lay along the side of the structure, close to a jet of burning gas. Responding to the scene, McGrain saw Andrew's exposed hand and approached him despite intense heat and the close proximity of flames issuing from

the gas line. He kicked aside rubble from atop Andrew, picked him up, and took him to safety.

Benjamin Montgomery, 32, who operated a mall business in Lihue, Hawaii, rescued Ping Zhou, 33, from a knife attack on Jan. 10, 2007. Zhou was seated at a table in the mall courtyard when a woman armed with a large knife approached and stabbed her in the back. Screaming, she ran into a nearby restaurant, the assailant following her. Montgomery, of Koloa, Hawaii, witnessed the assault. He followed the women into the restaurant, where the assailant had resumed stabbing Zhou at a point about 30 feet from the door. Montgomery approached the assailant and grasped her, securing her knife hand. He disarmed her and then took her outside, where police who arrived shortly arrested her.

Lindsey A. Witherspoon, an 18-year-old college student from Kingsport, Tenn., saved a woman from drowning in Fort Patrick Henry Lake, Kingsport, on Dec. 26 of last year. A vehicle driven by a 20-year-old woman began to submerge in the lake after leaving the adjoining parking lot. From nearby, Witherspoon ran to the bank of the lake, removed items of attire, and entered the water, despite its cold temperature. She swam about 75 feet to the car, where the woman was struggling to emerge through the window of the driver's door. Witherspoon grasped her and pulled her the rest of the way out. With difficulty, the woman nearly submerging her, Witherspoon swam to wadable water at the bank, where others aided them from the lake.

Eighteen-year-old university student **Kyle Christopherson** of Oxford, Ga., saved Daniel C. Broaddus from drowning in the Atlantic Ocean at Daytona Beach Shores, Fla., last year, on July 23. Broaddus, 47, was pulled out from shore by a rip current, and he made no progress in returning. From a nearby condominium pool, Christopherson ran to the beach and into the choppy water and swam about 150 feet to him. Realizing that he was on a submerged sandbar, Christopherson pulled Broaddus onto the bar, where they recaptured their strength. Christopherson established a hold on Broaddus and swam toward shore on a diagonal course to avoid the rip current. Using only one arm to swim, he made slow progress. A lifeguard aided them in wadable water.

Diane D. Cox rescued Sandra Ruiz from an assault at their apartment complex in Newbury Park, Calif., on Aug. 12, 2007. At night, Ruiz, 33, was attacked by a man armed with a meat cleaver in the courtyard of the complex. Alerted to the attack, Cox, 52, administrative assistant, ran to the scene, where she saw the assailant atop Ruiz, striking her. Cox jumped on the assailant and knocked him to the ground. Although the

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Educational foundation

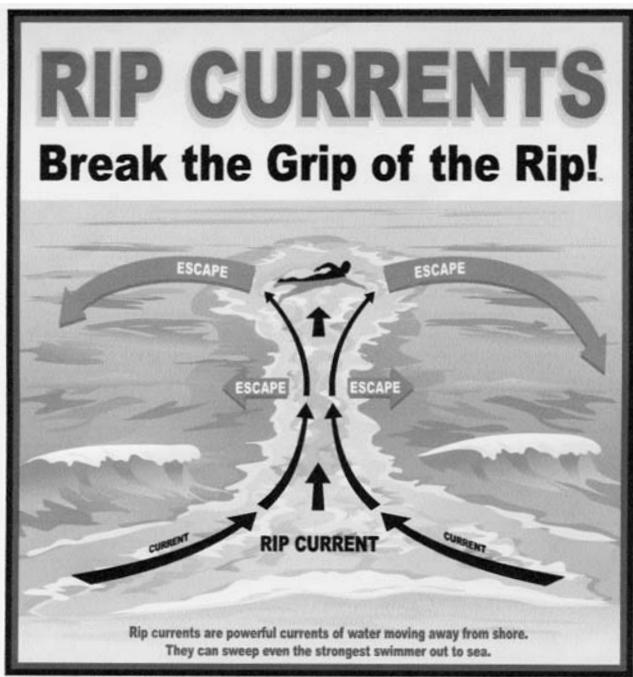
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word out, the foundation publishes an educational brochure, which Giner distributes to visitors at health and safety fairs and charitable events and to realtors, for handing out to tourists who rent hotel rooms and condominiums. In addition, she shows a video by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Association (NOAA). Finding that partnering with others is an effective means of promoting awareness of rip currents, she has teamed up with organizations in Miami-Dade County to help in her mission.

Giner's ultimate goal is to prevent others from losing a loved one to drowning. "The journey is painful but I am determined to carry on Giancarlo's memory and make a difference in his name," she said. She is being helped by Squicimari's fiancée, Sasha Herrera, who serves as vice president of the foundation. The foundation hosts a website (www.ripcurrents.com) on which it explains how rip currents work and describes the flag system used at beaches.

Rip currents are powerful, channeled currents of water flowing away from shore, typically extending through the surf zone and past the line of breaking waves. They can occur at any beach with breaking waves, including those on the Great Lakes. Swimmers get into trouble by attempting to swim against the current to return to shore and then becoming unable to stay afloat through fear, panic, exhaustion, or lack of swimming skills. The recommended approach for dealing with a rip current is, primarily, not to fight it. Ride out the current, or swim from it by following the direction of the shoreline, and then return toward shore.

The girl whom Squicimari tried to save was removed from the water by H. Lee Cooper, a 44-year-old sales executive from Westport, Conn., who was vacationing at the beach. He too was awarded the medal.  — Susan L. Marcy, Case Investigator



RIP CURRENTS
Break the Grip of the Rip!

Rip currents are powerful currents of water moving away from shore. They can sweep even the strongest swimmer out to sea.

IF CAUGHT IN A RIP CURRENT

- ◆ Don't fight the current
- ◆ Swim out of the current, then to shore
- ◆ If you can't escape, float or tread water
- ◆ If you need help, call or wave for assistance

SAFETY

- ◆ Know how to swim
- ◆ Never swim alone
- ◆ If in doubt, don't go out

More information about rip currents can be found at the following web sites:
www.ripcurrents.noaa.gov
www.usla.org



LATEST AWARDEES

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assailant struck Cox on the face with the cleaver, inflicting a significant injury, she held down his weapon hand. Another resident of the complex arrived, disarmed the assailant, and helped Cox detain him for police. Cox required hospital treatment for blunt trauma to the side of her face, including a fracture.

On Aug. 13, 2007, **Jarmaine E. Ravenell** of Ewing, N.J., and **Javier Jimenez** of Trenton, N.J., rescued Keisha L. Downing from a knife attack in Trenton. Downing, 36, was crossing a street when a man approached and stabbed her in the leg. Screaming, she struggled against him as they went to the pavement. Ravenell, 25, a cashier, and Jimenez, 34, a sales manager, were nearby. They immediately ran to the assailant and pushed him off Downing. The assailant then threatened the men with the knife and inflicted severe wounds to Ravenell about the forearms. Ravenell fell to the street, where the assailant continued to attack him. Ravenell kicked the assailant until he broke off the attack and walked away. Jimenez followed him to direct police to his location. Ravenell required hospitalization for surgery to both arms.

Dominique Chatman, 24, of Baton Rouge, La., and his father, **Gregory J. Carson**, 43, of Slidell, La., died attempting to save Joy R. Anderson and Sharon R. Haskins from drowning in the Gulf of Mexico at Miramar Beach, Fla., on Sept. 11, 2007. Holding to a small surfboard and calling for help, Anderson, 49, and Haskins, 24, struggled to return to the beach from a point about 300 feet out. Anderson's great-nephew, Chatman, a supervisor, was wading ashore in the vicinity. He turned and swam out toward the women, and from the beach, Carson, who also was a supervisor, and another man entered the water and swam out toward them. The other man reached the women and struggled to take them to shore by towing the surfboard. They ultimately reached safety, but Chatman and Carson submerged. They were shortly removed from the water but could not be revived.

Timothy John Foote, a mail carrier from Harrisburg, Pa., rescued his neighbor David H. Jauss from a burning house last year, on Oct. 29. Jauss, 78, lay unconscious on the floor of the first-floor family room of his house after fire broke out in that room at night. Foote, 45, was alerted to the fire and responded barefoot to the scene. He broke through the door opening to the hall off the family room and entered, despite spreading flames in the family room in the vicinity of its hall doorway, including on the ceiling. Finding his course blocked by burning furniture and debris, he retreated for a shovel and for shoes from another neighbor. Re-entering, Foote pushed away debris and, seeing Jauss on the floor, approached and grasped him by the legs. He pulled Jauss into the hall and to safety.

FRIENDS REMEMBERED

Mabel N. Brown, 98, of Yates Center, Kan., died Aug. 19. Brown was the widow of Carnegie Medal awardee Frank Wesley Brown, who died at age 26 in 1937 attempting to save a teenager from drowning in the Fall River at Eureka, Kan. Left with two small daughters to raise in the midst of the Great Depression, Brown was given a monthly grant from the Hero Fund to supplement her wages, and she remained a beneficiary of the grant until her death. Brown was

*Mrs. Brown*

featured in the December 2007 issue of *imPULSE*, which can be accessed on line (www.carnegiehero.org), then click on "resources" and "newsletter archives").

Carnegie Medal awardee **Stephen F. Coenen**, 59, of New Orleans, La., died Sept. 22. He was cited for his actions of Dec. 7, 2002, by which he rescued the victim of an attack by two men on a residential street near Coenen's home at night. When Coenen, a landscape architect, intervened, one of the assailants shot him in the chest. Both assailants fled but were apprehended. Of the rescue, Coenen wrote, "As a non-violent person, I had to resort to violence

*Mr. Coenen*

in the defense of Mr. Williams. After missing two months' work and considerable medical expense, I feel strongly about the need for action when there is injustice both on the large and small scale."

Lawrence R. Paulhus, 58, died March 13, 2007. At age 17 in 1966, Paulhus helped to save the driver of a car that had crashed and caught fire in Somerset, Mass., near Paulhus's home in Swansea. He was awarded the Carnegie Medal in 1967 and used the accompanying financial grant to help fund his education at Providence, R.I., College.

Lloyd L. Waterman, 81, of Mesa, Ariz., died Sept. 15. When a railroad switchman at age 32 in 1959, he saved a 7-year-old boy from drowning in the Stanislaus River at Oakdale, Calif., and then attempted to save the boy's would-be rescuer, 43, who drowned. Then of Escalon, Calif., Waterman was awarded the medal in 1963.

*(continued on page 8)**Author studies disaster survival techniques, delves into psyche of those acting for others*

By Jeffrey A. Dooley, Investigations Manager
Carnegie Hero Fund Commission

Ever wonder how you might respond in an emergency, one in which your life, and the lives of others, would be at risk? In *The Unthinkable: Who survives when disaster strikes—and why* (Crown Publishing, 2008), author Amanda Ripley reports on numerous cases of individuals caught up in extraordinarily dangerous situations and how they survived them.

Using interviews with survivors and scientists who have researched psychological factors involved, Ripley delves deeply into the Sept. 11, 2001, evacuation of the Twin Towers in New York City, as well as other "high impact, low probability" events, in an attempt to learn more about how people respond in emergencies. In doing so, she offers some valuable "real-world" advice on how to learn to react in ways that might increase the odds of surviving.

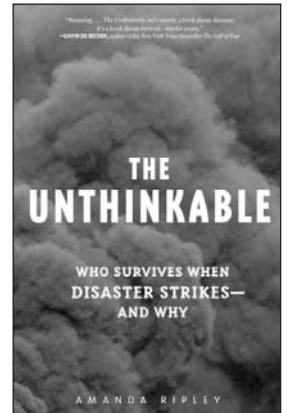
Being mentally prepared is one critical way to increase the odds. Research has shown that the brain tends to freeze when confronted by a life threat. Ripley says there are ways to prepare the brain to act on autopilot when disaster strikes, such as, when facing a threat in a building, just knowing where the exits are and actually using them before an emergency. Sometimes, as Ripley points out, a good leader is needed in group situations, someone who can confidently take command and give directions. Ultimately, overcoming fear is the key to survival.

Of particular interest to the Hero Fund, Ripley devotes a chapter to heroism, exploring the psyche of a few individuals who responded to calls for help following the Jan. 13, 1982, crash of an airliner into the Potomac River in Washington, D.C. Uncommon behavior of the type has always been of interest to researchers who wonder what prompts such people to take action in extreme circumstances when others do not. In an interview with sheet metal worker Roger Olian, who entered the river and swam toward crash survivors clinging to debris, Ripley reports that while his intent was to save them if he could, he acted also to give *hope*, at the very least, to those in the water. For their actions that day, Olian and three other men—Lenny Skutnik and U. S. Park Police officers Donald Usher and Melvin Windsor—each received the Carnegie Medal.

But why do it? Why risk your life for a stranger?

As the Commission's staffers have learned in the course of their work, and as Ripley notes, many respond to the question by saying, "I couldn't have lived with myself if I hadn't done it," or, "I would like to know that someone would do the same for my family or me." In the final analysis, there is no single reason that causes a person to act heroically. Each set of circumstances is unique, as is the individual who voluntarily forfeits his own safety in behalf of a stranger whose life is in peril.

Ripley's *The Unthinkable* gives much food for thought on how to react in emergencies not only to survive, but also to ensure that others survive as well. 

*Ms. Ripley*



BEHIND THE SCENE

Awed by tradition of selflessness

By Deonna M. Dreher
Administrative Assistant, Carnegie Hero Fund Commission

After spending two-plus years at home with my kids, I decided that I needed a change. In my job search, I was blessed to be interviewed by the Hero Fund, which was looking for someone to take on the duties of a semi-retired administrative assistant ...hired 53 years ago! The position was offered to me, and so with huge shoes to fill, I began working for the Commission on Sept. 1 after a two-month temporary placement.



Deonna M. Dreher is the Hero Fund's newest employee and is shown in its new office suite during construction (see page 1).

At first I was shocked—frankly, horrified—by some of the cases that come to our attention. As the mother of three small children, I found it hard to read them and not stay awake at night watching my kids sleep. But the more I read, the more I realized that, although the losses are great in some of the cases, the gains are awesome in most of them. To read about a neighbor pulling

a child from a burning home, or someone jumping into treacherous waters to save a stranger, gives me hope. It lets me know that not everything we read or hear about is bad. There are still selfless people around—actually, a lot of them. And we, in keeping with the wishes of Andrew Carnegie, work to see that the most extraordinarily selfless of them do not go unnoticed.

My duties with the Hero Fund are those typically done by an administrative assistant, and in addition I participate in the case investigation and awarding process. The most gratifying part of my job by far is working with the beneficiaries. They include both

(continued next column)

HELLO, GOOD-BYE (SORT OF)

Two changes have been made recently to the Hero Fund's staff: Douglas R. Chambers, standing at center, retired as full-time director of external affairs on Oct. 31, and Deonna M. Dreher, standing second from left, joined the organization on Sept. 1 as administrative assistant. Retaining the title and many of his duties, Chambers is now working on a part-time basis. He was feted over pizza and cake on his 65th birthday

in October by his coworkers: seated, Susan L. Marcy (foreground) and Myrna J. Braun, and standing from left, Jeffrey A. Dooley, Dreher, Gloria A. Barber, Chambers, Marlin Ross, Eileen J. White, and Melissa A. Spangler. For more on Dreher, see "Behind the Scene," this page.



AWED BY TRADITION

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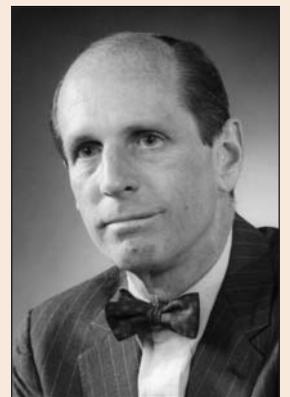
the dependents of posthumous awardees of the Carnegie Medal and the awardees themselves, whom the Commission helps with continuing support, scholarship assistance, and death benefits. I've seen cases in which a 17-year-old hero can now realize the dream of becoming a lawyer with our help. I speak to women who have long ago lost their husbands and raised their children and find them grateful for the support of the Hero Fund. To see relationships built and sustained with them over 50, 60, or even 70 years is remarkable.

Never could I have imagined the accounts of tragic loss and happy endings that embody the wonderful tradition that this organization has. I feel fortunate to be a part of it. 

FRIENDS REMEMBERED

(continued from page 7)

Honorary Commission Member **George H. Taber**, 79, who served on the board of the Carnegie Hero Fund for 20 years, died Sept. 20. Taber, of Pittsburgh, was elected to the Commission in 1979 and served until 1999, at which time he became an honorary member. A native of New York and a graduate of Harvard University, Taber was a member of the Hero Fund's Executive Committee, its awarding body. He was also former chairman of the board of the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center and vice president of the Richard King Mellon Foundation, where he was active in supporting land conservation throughout the U.S.



Mr. Taber

Alida E. Pettit Worobel, 65, of Sandy Hook, Conn., who was awarded the Carnegie Medal at age 15, died Oct. 2. As a schoolgirl in 1958, Worobel witnessed a truck overturn and catch fire, trapping the driver. She approached the windshield, grasped the arms of the 175-pound man, and dragged him from the vehicle. Aflame, the man ran from the truck, but Worobel caught up to him and helped to extinguish the flames on his attire by hitting him with her coat. She was named woman of the year by the Sunday paper, and when the First Baptist Church of Stratford, Conn., gave her funds to replace her coat, she turned the money over to the victim's family.

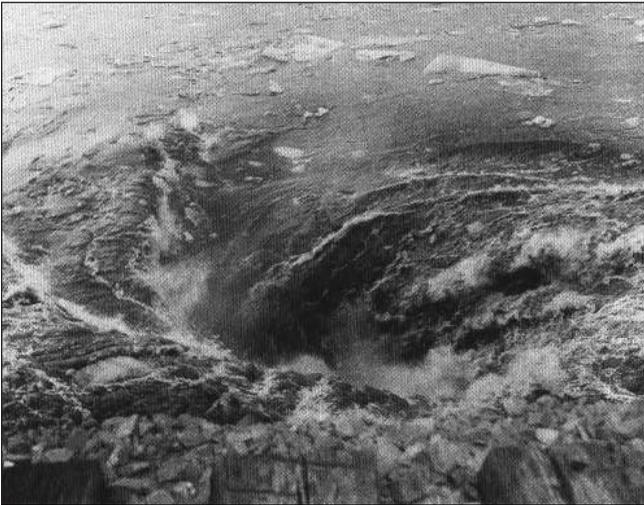
FROM THE ARCHIVES

HORROR, HEROISM IN MINE DISASTER 50 YEARS AGO

It has been 50 years since the Knox Mine Disaster, which held both horror and heroism for the residents of a small community south of Scranton, Pa.

On Jan. 22, 1959, a thaw had caused the level of the Susquehanna River to overflow its banks in Port Griffith near the River Slope Mine, a labyrinth of underground passageways. The mine was connected to an older, abandoned coalmine, with both mines reaching under the river itself. State law required a buffer of at least 35 feet of rock between the roof of a mine and the river bottom, but in the River Slope Mine, there were areas where the roof had been excavated to within six feet of the river, and in one area the separation was only 19 inches.

In mid-afternoon, when more than 50 men were below ground, an area of the mine's thin roof could no longer support the weight of the river, and it collapsed, creating a hole estimated from 75 to 150 feet wide. More than 10 billion gallons of water dropped in a massive whirling funnel into the mine. Twelve



A whirlpool was created by the Susquehanna River flowing through a hole in the roof of a coalmine at Port Griffith, Pa., 50 years ago. To seal the breach, more than 50 railroad cars and 500 mine cars were dumped into it, as were bales of hay, railroad ties, dirt, and rock. It took two days to begin to stop the flow of the water through the hole, which was estimated to be up to 150 feet wide.

miners were believed to have been killed instantly.

One group of miners was able to escape before rising water could stop them, but the remaining miners were not as fortunate. Seven of them, including Amedeo Pancotti, 50, entered the abandoned mine and made their way to the base of its air shaft, which extended almost vertically about 70 feet up to ground level. Unknown to them, the shaft had been used over the years as a dump, and dirt, stones, tree limbs, cans, tires, and mine equipment formed a

(continued on back cover)

THE QUOTABLE A.C.



It is the stagnant pool of contentment, not the running streams of ambition, that breeds disease in the body social and political.

— From *The Gospel of Wealth*, 1889

CONTINUUM



GRAVE MARKERS Bronze grave markers (above), cast in the likeness of the Carnegie Medal, are available at no cost to the families of deceased awardees. They are designed for mounting on stone or bronze memorials. Contact Susan Marcy (susan@carnegiehero.org) or write her at the address given below.

MEDAL REFINISHING The Hero Fund will refinish Carnegie Medals at no cost to the owner. The medals are to be sent to the Hero Fund's office by insured, registered mail. Allow a month for the process. The contact is Myrna Braun (myrna@carnegiehero.org).

OBITUARIES Written accounts of the awardee's life, such as contained in an obituary, are sought for addition to the awardee's page on the Commission's website. Contact Doug Chambers (doug@carnegiehero.org).

ANNUAL REPORTS Copies of the Hero Fund's 2007 annual report are available, as are those of the centennial report of 2004, which lists the names of all awardees from 1904 through 2004. Contact Gloria Barber (gloria@carnegiehero.org).

"A CENTURY OF HEROES" The centennial book describing the first 100 years of the Hero Fund is available by contacting carnegiehero@carnegiehero.org.

COMMEMORATIVE MEDAL A silver medal struck in the likeness of the Carnegie Medal to commemorate the 2004 centennial of the Hero Fund is available for purchase through the Commission's website.

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FROM THE ARCHIVES

HORROR, HEROISM (continued from page 9)

30-foot-deep layer at the bottom of the shaft. Air currents felt through the debris, however, offered the men a ray of hope.

With a piece of board and their hands, the trapped miners dug through the debris and managed to climb to the top of the heap. There, they were crestfallen to see that 50 feet separated them from the top of the shaft and that the walls of the 10-foot-square opening offered little in the way of hand- or footholds.



Pancotti was determined to attempt escape, despite the warnings from others that, were he to fall, he would be killed. For 10 minutes he climbed, seeking holds wherever he could before reaching the surface, at one time depending on an inch-wide sapling for support. Once outside the shaft, Pancotti ran to the mine office and alerted officials to the location of the other men, who were then rescued.

For his bravery, Pancotti was awarded the Carnegie Medal and \$500. He never worked inside a coal mine again and died at the age of 70 in 1979.

Pancotti's daughters, Hortense Oschal of Exeter, Pa., and Clementina Desuta of Mercer, Pa., recall their shock on learning of the mine accident. Oschal was at home when her father-in-law, who was a police officer, stopped to inform her family of the cave-in. At the same time, Desuta was walking home from high school with a friend, who told her the river had breached the mine. Once at home, she recalls her father, his face gray, embracing her.

Although it was impossible to approach the site that day, Oschal went there a few days later. She was dazed by the ferocious strength of the whirlpool and alarmed by what could have been her father's fate. It was she who nominated her father for the medal, and she remains in possession of it. "He was a very humble man," Oschal said. She and her sister "don't want people to forget what he did." ❏

— Marlin Ross, Case Investigator

In a photo taken after his 1959 heroic act, Carnegie Medal awardee Amedeo Pancotti holds a picture of the 50-foot-deep shaft that he scaled to get aid for his fellow miners. With him are his wife Mary and daughters Clementina (seated) and Hortense.

imPULSE is a periodic newsletter of the CARNEGIE HERO FUND COMMISSION, a private operating foundation established in 1904 by Andrew Carnegie. • The Hero Fund awards the CARNEGIE MEDAL to those throughout the United States and Canada who risk their lives to an extraordinary degree while saving or attempting to save the lives of others. • The Commission also provides financial assistance, which may include scholarship aid and continuing grants, to the heroes and to the dependents of those awardees who are disabled or die as the result of their heroic acts.

Further information is available on-line or by contacting the Commission.

Any ideas? imPULSE welcomes your submissions for publication, and your ideas for consideration. Be in touch!

Address change? Please keep us posted!

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