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**Cruising Club of America Presents 2008 Rod Stephens Trophy for Outstanding Seamanship to
Susanne Huber-Curphey and Tony Curphey**

New York, N.Y., USA (January 13, 2009) – The Cruising Club of America has selected Susanne Huber-Curphey and Tony Curphey, a married couple and solo sailors who live together while in port, but sail their own boats cruising around the world to receive its prestigious 2008 Rod Stephens Trophy for Outstanding Seamanship. Huber-Curphey sails a 1964 Rhodes 41 fiberglass sloop, *So Long*, and her husband Tony's boat, *Galenaia*, is a 1958 plywood 27-foot heavy displacement cutter. Susanne, 47, is from Germany, and is an architect, while Tony, 63, who is English, is retired. Their dog, Honey, sails with Susanne, and because of severe pet laws in some countries, can change their cruising plans. The trophy was presented at the club's annual Awards Dinner in New York on January 13, 2009 by CCA Commodore Ross Sherbrooke, of Boston, Mass.

The couple had planned a passage from Bunbury in West Australia with their destination Lautoka, in Fiji. This non-stop voyage was to take them via the Great Australian Bight, south of Tasmania, and through the Tasman Sea west of New Zealand.

On the 29th day out of Bunbury, in gale force winds from the northeast, Tony noticed that *Galenaia* was taking water from aft. Upon inspection in heavy seas, he saw that the transom-hung rudder was cracked above the waterline, and that the skeg was broken. At their noon radio schedule Tony discussed the situation with Susanne and asked her to stand by on the radio every hour. He then rigged three lines over the transom, hoping to stop any movement of the skeg.

Susanne and *So Long* had been becalmed for four days and was now 150 miles ahead of Tony's *Galenaia*. In the afternoon, Tony told her, "If I have to be rescued, I would rather it was by my wife rather than authorities responding to an EPIRB deployment." He later said, "We decided that she would make her way back to me, and in fact my brave, lovely wife had already changed course and was heading back towards me."

The next morning the gale had gone, but rough and sloppy seas remained. Tony launched the Avon inflatable dinghy, and with wet suit, mask, and snorkel, he went in the water to inspect the damage. He discovered that the whole fore and aft length of the skeg, about a meter and a half, was broken away

from the hull and leaning to port and that he rudder had snapped just above the waterline. The water influx required pumping once an hour.

The wind vane steering was still working, and the trim-tab attached to the lower half of the rudder worked, so *Galenaia* got under way. On the 28th of March, two days after she turned around and 31 days out of Bunbury, Susanne and *So Long*, with the aid of GPS and regular single sideband radio contact, made a visual sighting of Tony and *Galenaia*.

Susanne suggested towing, thinking that if the worst happened and *Galenaia* began breaking up, Tony at least would be on the end of a line. That would make it easier for him to get aboard *So Long* if he had to.

In late afternoon with a big swell running, and with masts coming perilously close together, the third attempt was successful and Tony got a heaving line across to *So Long*. Between them, they had about 80 meters of 16mm nylon towline. According to Tony, "the whole episode was quite nerve wracking."

They decided to head for Port Nelson, at the northern end of the South Island of New Zealand, about 650 nautical miles distant. Their main intention was to get north as quickly as possible to get out of the paths of the frequent cold fronts and gales which cross the Tasman Sea at that time of year. The weather during the tow ranged from calms when Susanne would motor, and up to force 7 or 8. Most of the time both boats had sails up, and both were using their wind vane steering. At one time *Galenaia* in very light weather managed to get the tow line around her keel. It was cleared with no further damage done.

Under the threat of another gale which might have proved too much for the damaged *Galenaia*, King Neptune smiled, and *So Long* towed Tony and his boat into Nelson harbor eight days and 650 miles after taking the tow in the Tasman Sea. They arrived on a Saturday afternoon, with Customs and harbor authorities forewarned, and after clearing *Galenaia* was lifted out of the water. According to Tony, "I was finally able to embrace my heroine after 39 days at sea, the last eight of which we were only 80 meters apart."

In addition to presenting its Rod Stephens Trophy, the CCA also presented the following 2008 Award Citations:

The Blue Water Medal is awarded to William S. Piper III, M.D., for 12 years of cruising and voyaging in two boats, *Pipe Dream VI*, a J-40, and *Pipe Dream IX*, a 52' J-160 (aboard which he has logged over 132,000 miles) for a total of over 180,000 miles. His routes have included high latitude crossings of the North Pacific and Southern Oceans, as well as rounding Cape Horn, the Cape of Good Hope, and Cape Leeuwin in Western Australia. As an orthopedic surgeon he has performed numerous emergency procedures during his voyaging around the World.

The Far Horizons Award is awarded to John H. Harries and Phyllis Nickel for their extensive cruises and long distance passages in *Morgan's Cloud* to northern high latitudes, including Newfoundland, Labrador, Greenland, Iceland, Norway, and Svalbard. In the past 11 years they have completed four transatlantic passages, and twice wintered over in Tromso, Norway, 300 miles north of the Arctic Circle. They have shared their Norwegian cruising experiences and taught and inspired other sailors in their extensive on-line cruising guide.

The Charles H. Vilas Literary Prize is awarded to Skip Novak for the story of his voyage in 2008 submitted to the 2009 Cruising Club News, “Witness to Change.” Skip hosted a National Geographic film crew aboard his specially fitted out boat *Pelagic Australis* in January 2008 as they documented the changes that global warming has brought to the Antarctic Peninsula. He drew upon his 20 years of Antarctic voyaging to complete the expedition with exemplary seamanship and with a keen eye and appreciation for this harsh yet fragile area. Skip Novak’s story and his voyage provide great reading and help raise awareness of changes in the sailor’s environment.

The Richard S. Nye Trophy is awarded to Ronald C. Trossbach for bringing distinction to The Cruising Club of America by meritorious service, able seamanship, outstanding performance in long range cruising, and his statesmanship in the affairs of international yachting with his long term and ongoing contributions to Safety at Sea programs and seminars.

The Royal Cruising Club Trophy is awarded to Robert A. Van Blaricom for his trip from San Francisco to Prince William Sound in Alaska in his 32’ sloop *Misty*, a cruise of some 2,000 miles. His story in the 2009 Cruising Club News, “Voyage to the Hall of the Mountain King” is most interesting and a helpful reference for others planning a trip to Alaska.

About the Cruising Club of America

The Cruising Club of America is dedicated to offshore cruising, voyaging and the “adventurous use of the sea” through efforts to improve seamanship, the design of seaworthy yachts, safe yachting procedures and environmental awareness. Now in its 88th year, the club has 10 stations throughout the U.S., Canada and Bermuda, with approximately 1200 members who are qualified by their experience in offshore passage making. In even-numbered years, the CCA organizes the Newport to Bermuda Race in conjunction with the Royal Bermuda Yacht Club. It also sponsors several Safety at Sea seminars and hosts a series of “Suddenly Alone” seminars for the cruising couple.

For more information on the CCA, go to <http://www.cruisingclub.org>.

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