



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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VALLEJO BAYLINK FERRY RESCUES DISTRESSED SWIMMER

VALLEJO – A usually quiet sailing from Vallejo to San Francisco on the M/V Solano ferry boat turned into a rescue mission for its captain and crew on Sunday.

As the Solano neared Angel Island, Capt. Todd Nelligan noticed something that he felt needed further investigation, said Kevin Donnelly, a Baylink employee.

“The boat was near Angel Island when it spotted a swimmer,” Donnelly said. “We went over to investigate and found that the swimmer had been separated from his escort boat.”

Donnelly said swimmers in the San Francisco Bay typically have someone nearby in a boat in case of an emergency during bay swims. The swimmer, whose name was not known, had been separated from his escort boat.

“We thought it was a good idea to see if he was OK,” Donnelly said. Turns out it was a good idea they did, as the swimmer asked for assistance.

At that point the ferry’s crew of Mike Probst, Felix Thierry and Bud Erwin deployed a piece of equipment known as a Jason’s Cradle to assist the swimmer. A Jason’s Cradle is a ladder-like device that comes in different widths and lengths and is made of polyethylene and stainless steel. One end is secured to the boat, while the other end is unrolled down the side of the boat, forming a non-collapsible loop below the surface of the water. A conscious person can climb the Jason’s Cradle like a ladder. An unconscious person is floated into the loop and then pulled up to the deck.

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Once the swimmer was on board the Solano, a 41-foot Coast Guard ship came alongside and picked up the swimmer.

Donnelly said Baylink had contacted the Coast Guard to see if there were any special swimming events taking place over the weekend, but was told there had been no notifications. Adding to the concern was the fact that the swimmer was right in the middle of a shipping channel.

“Usually they have to check in and give us a heads up,” Donnelly said. “But there are always some lone wolves out there.”

About a year ago another Vallejo ferry boat, the M/V Vallejo, was called upon during a morning commute run to rescue a disabled tug boat that was pulling a petroleum barge. The tug boat’s engine had failed and was adrift, heading toward a rocky shoreline. The ferry was able to pull it back into the Mare Island Strait and away from both the shoreline and a possible collision with the Carquinez Bridge, possibly avoiding a major oil spill.

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