

# Radio Call Saves One; Three Drown

A fishing trip for four Tiffin residents ended in tragedy Saturday afternoon when their 16-foot out-board swamped and capsized in stormy Lake Erie just east of Kelleys Island.

Missing and presumed drowned are Sylvester Wagner, 46; his wife, Lois, 42; and Richard Whetherall, 20, all of Tiffin.

Frañces Wagner, 17, daughter of the missing couple and fiancée of Whetherall, was found by the Coast Guard clinging to a life jacket near the partially - sunken boat, about a quarter mile off shore.

A Sandusky couple, Mr. and Mrs. Vern Long, 213 Perry St., alerted the Coast Guard when they heard a report of a capsized boat over their citizens' band radio.

The radio report was given by Richard Shafer, of Canton, who was cruising in his own boat nearby when the accident happened. Shafer said he saw a capsized boat, but didn't see anyone in the water and didn't investigate further. He asked anyone within reach of his radio to notify the Coast Guard.

Mrs. Long told the Register this morning that she and her husband keep their radio on all the time. Their prompt call to the Cedar Point Coast Guard probably saved the lone survivor's life.

Miss Wagner's account of the

incident to the Marblehead Coast Guard revealed she had sighted seven boats passing; at least three or four were close enough for their occupants to spot the capsized boat but "just passed it by," she said.

The four boaters were not wearing life jackets when the boat overturned, Miss Wagner said. Her mother had a life jacket on but it was not buckled. When the woman was thrown into the water her life jacket slipped off, Miss Wagner said, and her mother went down.

Her father tried in vain to reach a life jacket floating about eight feet away. The choppy waters kept him from reaching it, Miss Wagner said, and she watched him go down, too.

Her fiancée, Whetherall, was reportedly a good swimmer. She said he kept shouting to her as they drifted apart. Then there was silence.

Suffering from shock and exposure, Miss Wagner was taken to Magruder Hospital in Port Clinton. She was released Sunday. The boat was towed to the Marblehead Coast Guard Station.

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