
**California Surf
Lifesaving Association**

*Newsletter Vol. 12 No. 2
Fall 2008*

THE
Cal Surf

www.cslsa.org



The CSLSA Executive Board of Directors for 2008-2009 are listed below:

President	Rob McGowan
Vice-President	Charlotte Graham
Secretary	Mike Beuerlein
Treasurer	Rob Williams
Past President/Advisor	Bob Moore
1st Delegate	Jon Mitchell
2nd Delegate	Bill Richardson
3rd Delegate	Reenie Boyer
4th Delegate	Alex Peabody

On the cover: San Diego Lifeguards at Ocean Beach c. 1951. L to R Top Row: Don Mellon, Jim Gilmore, Al Walker, Jerry Booker; Middle Row: Rob Nelson, Unknown, Unknown, Carl Knox, Bob Baxley, Don Griffiths; Bottom Row: Bob Hadley, Unknown, Lincoln Hyle, Ollie Brown. (See "White Haired Man" article page 6)

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2009 CALENDAR

CSLSA Spring Meeting:
4/9 & 4/10 @ L.A. County Lakes

USLA Spring Meeting:
4/23 - 4/25 @ Asilomar (Cal State)

CSLSA Regionals:
7/24 (JG's) & 7/25 @ Seal Beach

Taplins:
8/1 @ L.A. County

USLA Nationals:
8/6 - 8/8 @ Ft. Lauderdale

Cal Surf Magazine

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California Surf Lifesaving Association

P.O. Box 366, Huntington Beach, CA 92648
www.CSLSA.org Fax (714) 374-1500

Executive Board:

Rob McGowan - President
Charlotte Graham - Vice-President
Mike Beuerlein - Secretary
Rob Williams - Treasurer
Bob Moore - Past President/Advisor
Jon Mitchell - First Delegate
Bill Richardson - Second Delegate
Reenie Boyer - Third Delegate
Alex Peabody - Fourth Delegate

Committee Chairs:

Bill Richardson - Certification
Jay Butki - Competition
Jon Mitchell - Exchange
Bill Richardson - Special Awards and Presentations
Alex Peabody - Legislation
Charlotte Graham - Membership
Richard Godino - Newsletter
Bill Humphreys - Public Education
Mike Scott - Training
Reenie Boyer - Junior Lifeguards
Robert Moore - Website
Rob Williams - Ways and Means

Newsletter:

Editor - Richard Godino

Contributors:

Don Mellon - San Diego
Kat Pritchard - Newport
Andrew Park - L.A. City
Bridget Srodon - L.A. City

Typesetting & Printing:

Inland Group

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Scott Hubbell

The CSLSA is a nonprofit organization incorporated in the State of California. Its principal goals are water safety, education, and the promotion of professional lifeguarding standards. These goals are accomplished primarily through beach safety presentations to school groups, educational exchange programs with members of the International Life Saving Federation and participation in regional and national competition.

ARTICLES NEEDED!

Agency Profiles / How To Articles
California Lifeguard History
Junior Lifeguard Stories / Unusual Rescues
Submit online to newsletter@cslsa.org

President's Message

by Robert McGowan

Another summer has come and gone, and although I don't think it was quite as record breaking as the summer of 2007, the summer of 2008 was a good one for most of us in the CSLSA.

The City of Huntington Beach had another year of *Ocean Force* filmed on their shores that I hope proves to be as good as last year. They also negotiated a deal with Toyota to outfit them with a brand new fleet of vehicles. The State Parks Lifeguards managed to avoid the drastic budget cuts proposed by the governor and were able to adequately staff their beaches. Their proposal to fund their operation through a ten dollar fee for each registered vehicle in California in return for free day use at State Parks, called the *State Park Access Pass* was supported by the CSLSA, but unfortunately did not make it out of the legislature into the budget in this era of no new taxes. Los Angeles County became the first *green* government lifeguard service when they entered into a deal with the Ford Motor Company to supply them with a fleet of Ford Eclipse hybrid vehicles. So we are moving forward in many ways.

For the first time in several years we were able to hold the Junior Lifeguard and Lifeguard Regionals on back-to-back days at the same venue. Thanks to Seal Beach and Joe Bailey and his staff, particularly Lori Walton, Mike Westmoreland, and Chris Pierce for all of their hard work in making this possible. The good news is that we are going back to Seal Beach next year. It was a great venue and we had one of the best turnouts for the Lifeguard Regionals in recent years. I would be remiss if I didn't thank Reenie Boyer, Junior Guard Chair, for her efforts on behalf of the JG's. Charlotte Graham, your Vice President, not only worked the JG day, but was also there for the Lifeguard competition and was in charge of registration, not an easy task. The competition would not have been possible without the yeoman efforts of Competition Chair Jay Butki, who not only built and maintained the competition courses, but was also instrumental in their installation, and he even found time to compete in a couple of the races. Other members of your Executive Board that helped officiate the event were Mike Beuerlein, Bob Moore, and Bill Richardson. I helped by being the announcer and typing up the results. Other volunteers that helped out were Gordon Gray, Mike Silvestri, Donna Richardson, Robert Torres, Eric Ching and Morgan McGowan. I cannot stress enough what a labor-intensive effort running a successful regional competition is, and we welcome all the help we can get. Please think about stepping up to help next year.

LACOLA and the County of Los Angeles Fire Department Lifeguard Division hosted the 2008 USLA Nationals at the Manhattan Beach Pier. Once again major kudos are due to Charlotte Graham and Jay Butki as event organizers. Comments I heard included "best ever" and "great venue." All and all, I think it was one of the best Nationals I have attended. We actually had three days in a row of morning to night sunshine, enough surf to make things interesting, and a good turnout in spite of the challenging economic conditions and the high cost of travel. As is the case with most of our events, none of this would have come to fruition without the efforts of Scott Hubbell and his company that provide a majority of the sponsorship for not only our events, but our membership kits as well. Thanks again Scott.

I'm not sure how he finds the time, or the time off, but in addition to the already mentioned events, Jay Butki organized, coached and managed teams that competed in the "Waterman Challenge at Waikiki Beach" where the California team placed first, and the "Sanyo Bussan Challenge" where the US team finished third, our first podium finish in an international competition in quite some time! Way to go Jay. Jay was also the manager, coach, and organizer of the California team that competed against the Victorians in the Wieland Shield, contested in Hermosa and Torrance Beach in early August.

The 2009 USLA Nationals are looking like they will be in Fort Lauderdale and LACOLA is exploring the possibility of hosting again in 2010.

Our next USLA National Meeting is next month in Cocoa Beach, Florida and if there is anything you want us to take back there, now is the time to let us know. Next spring we are hosting the national meeting at Asilomar Conference Center in Monterey. Alex Peabody has been working on this meeting for the better part of the last year, and it should be a good one. If you ever wanted to see what goes on at a national meeting this would be a good opportunity. The dates of the Asilomar meeting are April 23 - 25, 2009.

A couple of issues that were addressed at the Fall meeting were somewhat controversial. They include the Job Titles Committee and the USOC / USLA affiliation. All issues were heard and discussed at length and tentative positions were adopted by the committees concerned. It is hoped that these positions will be in the best interests of the CSLSA, the USLA and all of our members.

Competition Photos



Surfboats on the Beach at Regionals
- photo Kat Prichard, H2OSportsPhotos.com



Regionals - Men's Open Rescue Board Race
- photo Bridget Srodon



Regionals - Australian Rescue Race Technique
- photo Kat Prichard, H2OSportsPhotos.com



Regionals - LA City/LA County Rescue Race Technique
- photo Bridget Srodon



Catalina Classic - Ruben Carmona (top) and Fred Sardisco



Nationals - Head First Surfboat Disembarking
- photo Kat Prichard, H2OSportsPhotos.com

Competition Photos



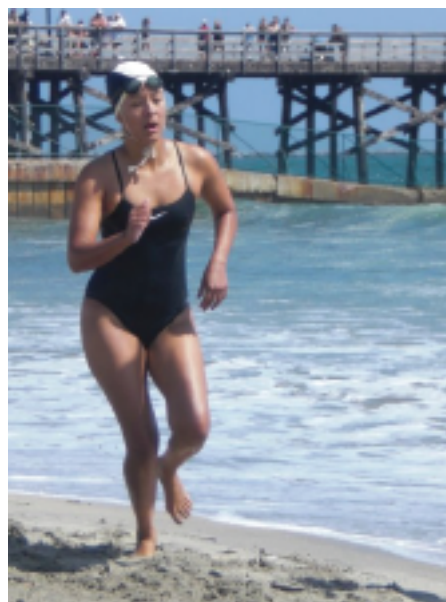
Taplin Closing Activities - photo Andrew Park



*Rescue Board Race
- photo Kat Prichard, H2OSportsPhotos.com*



*Regionals - Open Men Surf Swim
- photo Kat Prichard, H2OSportsPhotos.com*



*Regionals - Women's Open Run-Swim-Run
Giannina Orozco - photo Richard Godino*

The White Haired Man, September 1951

Article by Don Mellon

The last rays of summer were all around us. Each day the sun edged farther south. The days got shorter. The beach crowds got smaller. The ocean temperature got cooler. The lifeguards at Ocean Beach or "OB" as we beach boys called it, were quietly proud, proud that they had not had a drowning all season at one of the most dangerous beaches in San Diego. Like me, most of the guard crew that worked O.B. had grown up as beach boys. This was our beach and we were very comfortable here. Some of us had swum and surfed in these waters from the time we were little kids. The shore of O.B. was a combination of sandy beach and a large rock formation on its southern end. With the right kind of south swell, Ocean Beach could suddenly develop, dangerous and intense rip tides especially when large sets of waves came rolling over the rock outcropping. The water would pile up and then seek the point of least resistance on its rapid flow back out to sea.

On the day of the White Haired Man, a rip tide developed pretty much where it always did during a large south swell, right at the foot of Newport Ave, which is about halfway between the guard tower and the south end of the beach. That day we guards had done everything called for under these hazardous conditions, put out warning signs and red flags near the rip current and paid particular attention to anyone nearing the water in that area. Several times during the day we sent jeep patrols to the area to tell swimmers to come out of the water and swim in front of the green flag which was placed directly in front of the main tower. The guard on tower duty was instructed to do many things at once, keep his attention on the crowd but also make regular sweeps with his binoculars towards the dangerous area and to be ready to alert the jeep crew if swimmers were nearing the rip current. At four o'clock in the afternoon the dropping sun inhibited our ability to see clearly; the glare made it very difficult to distinguish swimmers in the water, as it became almost blinding to the unprotected eye. Polaroid sun glasses were the best we had to counteract this, and even those couldn't help if we had looked into the setting sun for long periods.

Was the guard on tower duty at four o'clock that afternoon inattentive after a long day? Was he distracted with

other activity on the beach? I'll never know. What I do know is that the White Haired Man got himself right into the throat of a roiling, sucking riptide without any of us seeing him. The tower guard as well as I and the other guard in the jeep saw the White Haired Man almost at the same time. It was my turn in the wet seat, that's the right hand passenger seat. The guard in this seat is responsible for being first into the water. With our eyes riveted on the White Haired Man we sped down the beach to the riptide area, where I hooked on the rescue float can and ran into the surf and started swimming directly into the foaming river-like riptide.

Swimming with the rip current it did not take me long to reach the White Haired Man. He was struggling like the typical rip-current-drowning victim. He was facing the shore trying his best to swim against the current and keep his head above water. He was getting weaker and weaker by the second and each time a wave would wash over him from behind he would take on water through his nose and mouth and the process was beginning to take its toll. He was underwater more than he was above water.

When I reached him he was under the water and I had to raise him to the surface. He was too weak to hold on to the float can so I just held him from behind with the can across his chest. This was just enough to keep his head above water and I knew I'd have to wait for the other guard to bring out the line can. The line can is used when a rescued swimmer is just too weak to hold on to the float buoy.

Jon Kowal, one of the strongest ocean swimmers I have ever known, would be reaching us soon pulling another rescue buoy attached to a couple of hundred yards of _ inch manila rope, the end of which would be attached to a large roller/reel on the rear of the jeep. When used correctly the line could be an effective life-saving tool. Oftentimes though, the enthusiastic beach crowd rushed into the water and began pulling on the line, trying to get the victim to the beach as soon as possible. This is done with the best of intentions but in reality the strong tension on the line tends to pull the victim as well as the lifeguards under

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The White Haired Man ... from page 6

the water of the out flowing rip current. When used correctly a slow retrieve brings the victim and the guards safely to the beach.

As I waited for Kowal to reach us, I still wondered how and why an old man with white hair could venture so far out into a riptide without my seeing him. The next thing I knew I saw Jon's head and shoulders burst up through a wave that had just passed over us. Connecting my can buoy to the line can took only a moment and then we gave the arm signal to the beach that we were ready for the retrieval. I would guess that by this time at least a half hour had passed and the crowd on the beach had grown into a hundred or so anxious to watch the excitement.

Sensing the seriousness of this rescue many of the young beachgoers were ever so ready and eager to help with the retrieval and therein lies the major problem for this standard type of ocean rescue. The guards on the beach were unable to control the vigorous helpers who by now were pulling on the line with all their might. I don't know how the victim got any air. Jon and I, while holding the White Haired Man, were being dragged through the water, one second gasping for breath above water, the next second we would be pulled under against the force of the rip. The buoy cans had been attached to us with belts, and we were unable to release them with all the water pressure pulling against us and doubling us over. Using our knowledge of water dynamics, we arched our backs, came to the surface and caught a breath every ten seconds or so. All this was happening while we were holding onto the White Haired Man trying to keep his head above water.

On reaching the beach, we found blankets had been spread out and we laid him with his head facing down the slope to help drain the water from his lungs and throat. We had covered him with blankets, so I couldn't really get a good idea of his age except for the white hair. At this point there was no air exchange and as much as we tried pumping his chest, we could get no positive results. A few minutes later a fire department resuscitator arrived and we continued to try and get an air exchange with no result. A bit later the ambulance attendants arrived and our first drowning victim was taken off our beach.

In the following days it continued to bother me how someone of the White Haired Man's age could become so

quickly swept out into the middle of a riptide unseen. Then summer turned to fall. All the beach kids were back in school, but a few of the regulars would come by in the afternoon to catch a wave or two and talk about the past summer and all the good times. Out of the blue on one of these balmy fall afternoons, a young man in a dress suit comes up to the jeep and wants to meet Don Mellon, the lifeguard who had saved his life. I knew instantly it was the White Haired man. I was shocked. He was only thirty years old. I learned later that his hair had turned pure white in his twenties. He was from some place in the Midwest and had come to Ocean Beach on his first day in California. Having never seen or been in the ocean, he ran as fast as he could into the beautiful blue water as a kind of cleansing celebration, little knowing that he was tempting death. We talked seriously about his near drowning, which, I realized had been a near death experience. All he could remember was the waves washing over his head as he tried in vain to swim back to the beach. He did not remember me bringing him up from under the water.

None of the guards had followed up on his condition because we thought he had left his life on the shore that day. No he didn't die; he came back from the other side in the hospital. 'The result of God's will' he told me. Our conversation had many religious references and in the end he offered me a Bible as a way of thanking me for interceding on God's behalf to save his life.

I don't remember what became of the Bible, but the vision of the White Haired Man floundering about in that fast moving rip current which led to one of the more dramatic ocean rescues I can recall occasionally recurs in my memory. Did he ever have a chance to change a life? Did he ever take the chance? And if he did, did his experience affect him the way mine did me.

It didn't completely change my life or the way I lived it, but it was a positive part of a young eighteen year old boy's life, and at 75 years of age I still recognize the value.

SPRING 2008 BOARD MEETING SUMMARY

By Richard Godino

The Spring 2008 CSLSA Board of Directors meeting was hosted by Long Beach on April 10 and 11.

President Rob McGowan started the meeting by introducing the newly elected Board of Directors. Charlotte Graham, Mike Beuerlein, Rob Williams and Bob Moore remained as Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer and Past President/Advisor respectively. Jon Mitchell of Newport, Bill Richardson of Huntington Beach and Reenie Boyer of Newport were introduced as the new First, Second and Third Executive Delegates. Alex Peabody remains as the Fourth Executive Delegate from the previous Board.

Rob then discussed an interesting development that came out of the Fall USLA meeting. The USLA has applied for USA Olympic Committee recognition and, thanks to the efforts of President Chris Brewster, is close to achieving it. There are a few obstacles that must be overcome before this can occur, but Rob is going to be working with the U.S. Olympic Committee to accomplish this. If these changes can be approved by the USLA Board in November, the USOC would place the application before their Board of Directors who will most likely approve it. Stand by for more information.

Rob also briefly discussed the 2008 Nationals (which were finally held at Manhattan Beach last August) and other competitions (Regionals and the Weiland Shield). Rob also mentioned that Alex Peabody is organizing our region's hosting of the USLA Board Meeting to be held at the Asilomar Conference Grounds in Pacific Grove next spring. In closing Rob mentioned the retirement of former President and long time State lifeguard Steve Long in May.

Vice President Charlotte Graham discussed her efforts in developing a standardized membership data base with USLA Membership Chair Charlie Hartl and notified the group of the upcoming Beach Safety Week.

During his report, Secretary Mike Beuerlein mentioned, among other things, his work with the USLA Training DVD Committee (Mike and his Huntington Beach colleague Mike Bartlett worked with TruTV to develop one of the more interesting segments of "Ocean Force" which aired earlier in the year).

Treasurer Rob Williams noted that all budget items will be treated as line items that will be evaluated and re-adjusted at each fall meeting. The Junior Lifeguard funds will be treated as a long-term liability and will remain in the account unaltered until used by the JG Committee.

Past President / Advisor Bob Moore, following Rob Williams, fleshed out the budget situation a bit more, noting that we raised dues and cut back on kit expenses, largely due to the success of the CSLSA efforts to get the USLA to approve SHP as a sponsor. This indirectly limited the support provided to CSLSA by SHP, but will, it is hoped, eventually benefit everyone in lifesaving, stating, "If USLA thrives, then so does the CSLSA." Bob is usually right, so we would all do well to listen.

Of interest from the Committee Reports:

Competition - Jay Butki provided a list of 26 upcoming competitions through September 2008.

Training - Mike Scott compiled a list of training activities from several CSLSA agencies. Notable among them were various levels of SCUBA, swiftwater, law enforcement, ICS, helo ops and vehicle safety training.

Newsletter - The CalSurf will be offered exclusively online due to budget cuts.

Membership - Charlotte Graham asks that all chapters submit a list of members and a single payment. Membership dues have been increased to \$30 annually. Finis Swim is added to the list of sponsors, joining Patagonia and Da Fin.

The Lifeguard Job Titles Ad Hoc Committee has nearly finalized its report on job title equivalency in relation to command level throughout the CSLSA. Newport objected to the report stating that it endangers meet and confer union issues.

California / New Zealand Exchange lifeguards Jesse Herdorff of Huntington Beach and Alex Scurr of Newport presented a slide show of their visit to New Zealand last winter.