

Official Newsletter
of the
**California Surf
Lifesaving
Association**
Spring 2022

The
CALSURF
Volume 27 No. 1

**NOW
HIRING**
LiveTheParksLife.com




Seal Beach Marine Safety
OCEAN LIFEGUARD TRYOUT
Sunday April 11th
8:00am Orientation @ HQ
www.sealbeachca.gov 562-430-2613

**Seasonal Ocean
Lifeguard
Tryouts**



February 19th and March 19th, 2022
Main Beach Lifeguard Tower

JOIN US!

**SAN DIEGO
LIFEGUARD TRYOUTS**

Swim 500 meters in under 10 minutes
Get an Interview




Be a Lifeguard

The Los Angeles County Fire Departments lifeguards have a long-standing tradition of being one of the top ocean lifeguarding agencies in the world. Whenever we offer our exam, we are looking for quality individuals with a strong aquatic background (swimming, surfing, etc.) to continue this tradition.




LIFEGUARD TRYOUTS
Long Beach Fire Department



**Seasonal
Ocean
Lifeguard
Tryouts**

**February 19th
& March 19th**

Link in bio for
more information!




THE GREATEST JOB IN THE WORLD

**JOIN THE
ENCINITAS
LIFEGUARDS**

TRYOUT DATE: 12/18/21
LOCATION: MOONLIGHT BEACH
400 W. C STREET, ENCINITAS, CA 92024

SWIM 500 METERS UNDER 10 MINUTES
AND GET AN INTERVIEW FOR THE
LIFEGUARD ACADEMY!

APPLICATION DUE:
12/18/21



**HUNTINGTON BEACH LIFEGUARD
TRYOUTS 2022**




INFO NIGHT:
January 6

WHERE:
Lifeguard Headquarters
70 Newport Pier

WHEN: 6:00 p.m.

**NEWPORT BEACH
LIFEGUARD**



YOUR CAREER STARTS HERE

**BECOME A
LAKE LIFEGUARD**



CAMP PENDLETON LIFEGUARD SERVICE

DEL MAR - SAN ONOFRE BEACH SUMMER JOB OPPORTUNITY

OCEAN LIFEGUARD

STARTING PAY 18.20 PER HOUR



**SAN CLEMENTE
LIFEGUARD TRYOUTS**

Sunday, February 20, 2022
Check-In at 7:00 AM

Marine Safety Headquarters - 620 Avenida Del Mar

Ocean Lifeguard: \$18.24 to \$22.17 per hour

2020 EXECUTIVE BOARD

| | |
|----------------|----------------|
| President | Bill Humphreys |
| Vice-President | Gus Avila |
| Past President | Mike Beuerlein |
| Secretary | Jim Hughes |
| Treasurer | Tony Sholl |
| 1st Delegate | Jay Butki |
| 2nd Delegate | Casey Graham |
| 3rd Delegate | Skip Prosser |
| 4th Delegate | Sean Cary |

INSIDE THE CALSURF NEWS

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EVENTS CALENDAR 2021/22

Spring CSLSA 2022 Board of Directors Meeting

October 7-8, Encinitas Lifeguards
Location: Encinitas, CA

Spring USLA 2022 Board of Directors Meeting

April 21-23, Great Lakes Region
Location: Chicago IL.

CSLSA 2022 Regional Jr. Lifeguard/Lifeguard Championships July 22-23, 2022

Location: Huntington State Beach

USLA 2022 National Jr. Lifeguard/Lifeguard Championships August 10-13, 2022

Location: Hermosa Beach, CA

Fall CSLSA 2022 Board of Directors Meeting

October 6-7, 2022
Location: TBD

Fall USLA 2022 Board of Directors Meeting

October 2022
Location: TBD

COMMITTEES

| | |
|-------------------------|--|
| Bylaw Committee..... | Bill Richardson & Bob Moore |
| Certification..... | Vince Lombardi |
| Exchange..... | Vincent Fiamengo & Leslie Schwene |
| Grants..... | Diego Busatto & Bryan Etnyre |
| Junior Lifeguards.... | Casey Graham & Chris Egan |
| Legislation..... | Adam Sandler |
| Sport & Fitness..... | Jay Butki & Skip Prosser |
| Membership..... | Charlotte Graham & Leslie Schwene |
| Newsletter..... | Jim Hughes |
| Prof. Standards..... | Sean Cary |
| Public Education..... | (vacant) |
| Public Info. Officer... | Adam Sandler |
| Public Relations..... | Renae Jackson |
| Social Media..... | Sierra Page, Jonathan Richards Leslie Schwene |
| Special Awards | Bill Richardson |
| Statistics..... | Ian Burton |
| Training | Mike Silvestri |
| Ways & Means..... | Tony Sholl |
| Website..... | Skip Prosser |

THE CALSURF NEWS

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Bill Humphreys President
California Surf Lifesaving Association

Greetings Lifesavers!

As we enter another summer, some things repeat themselves. Recruiting and training new lifeguards, tourists returning to the beach, and the excitement of another exciting summer on the way.

However, some things are radically different this year. We are on the downside of a pandemic, politics in the US are divisive, and there's a war involving Russia and Ukraine with potential to escalate to other countries. It goes without saying that all of these issues lead to additional stress on all of us.

While lifeguards are masters at adapting to change, particularly in emergencies, there are things that we obviously can't change. World affairs and pandemics are largely out of our control. All we can do is hope and pray for those impacted by the war and help where we can. These are just a few things we can't control – just like the tides ebbing and flowing or crowds returning to the beaches each summer.

But, although we can't change some of these conditions, we can control how we prepare and face them. Starting with your health and fitness, and extending to your mental attitude and training, you are in control of how this summer impacts you. And this will

have a direct impact on the job you do. Make an extra effort this year to assure you are mentally and physically fit and ready for the summer. Eat well, drink water, get plenty of rest. You all know this of course.

But, we all need to be reminded of how these things impact not only us - but those we serve. Make sure you have the training you need. At the same time, look out for your fellow lifesavers. If you see another lifeguard under stress, help them out or get them help. If you see a need or gap in training, let someone know. If you can lend a hand, do so. Only by looking out for each other can we all succeed in our mission. As open-water lifeguards our ultimate goal is to prevent and reduce injuries, accidents, and death at our beaches. Taking care of yourself is the first step in doing this. Your fellow lifesavers are certainly there to support you as is your agency. And, please remember, the CSLSA is here to support or assist in any way we can.

Take care. You are fulfilling a noble mission. You are Lifeguards for Life!

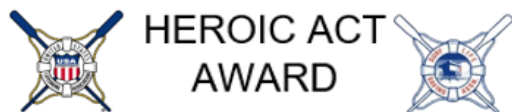
Bill

Bill Humphreys
CSLSA President



*As open-water lifesavers, our **MISSION** is to promote beach safety awareness and professional lifeguard standards through public education, training programs, exchange programs, junior lifeguard programs, competition, and other means. The ultimate goal is to prevent and reduce aquatic injuries, accidents, and death at open-water beaches in the Southwest Region of the United States Lifesaving Association.*

*Congratulations to the Following Award
Recipients:*



**OFF-DUTY RESCUE BY THIRD-YEAR LIFEGUARD
CHRIS PAUN**

On the evening of June 17, 2021, off-duty, third-year lifeguard Chris Paun was bodysurfing at the South Jetty Beach in Ventura when he observed a surfer that had passed out and was laying face down out in the water. Chris immediately swam over to the victim, turned him face up, and began calling out for assistance from others in the immediate area.

With assistance from the other individuals, Chris was able to return to shore with the victim. He found the victim to be unresponsive, pulseless, and non-breathing. He immediately began mouth-to-mouth rescue breathing and CPR until Ventura State Lifeguards arrived on scene.

Subsequently, Ventura City Fire, Ventura Harbor Patrol, and AMR Ambulance Service arrived on scene. The victim was transported to a local hospital, where he eventually made a full recovery.

For his immediate recognition of a critical situation, rescue effort, and for performing mouth-to-mouth rescue breathing and CPR at a time when the COVID pandemic was rampant, Chris Paun is being awarded the **United States Lifesaving Association, and California Surf Lifesaving Association's Medals of Valor.**

Rescue From Wipeout Cave – March 24, 2021

On the evening of March 24, 2021, San Diego Lifeguards were notified of a woman that had fallen into a cave behind a crack, located in the cliffs near Wipeout Beach. Chief James Gartland was off duty, in the area, and responded to establish Incident Command.

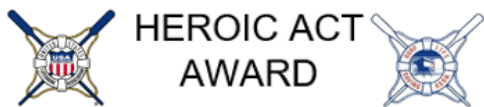
Lifeguard III Alan Kraklow arrived on scene shortly thereafter, was deployed and swam into a pitch-black narrow sea cave where he found a woman, face down and unconscious in the water. He stabilized the woman, while being pummeled by continuous ocean surges due to the large surf.

Lifeguard III Matthew Jackson responded to assist Kraklow in recovering the victim. Both Kraklow and Jackson were subjected to extremely hazardous conditions. Due to the narrow cave, strong ocean surges, and lifeless body weight caught in the sharp rocks, Kraklow and Jackson requested additional personnel and a rescue board in order to extricate the victim.

Sergeant Charles Knight and Lifeguard Thomas Cavanaugh entered the cave just as Kraklow and Jackson freed the victim from the rocks. She was placed on the rescue board and taken out through the cave's opening. Once on the beach, CPR was initiated until she was released to Fire Paramedics. Shortly thereafter, the victim had a return of spontaneous circulation and stable vitals. She was then transported to the hospital and was expected to make a full recovery.

For their selfless acts of lifesaving heroism under extreme conditions, Alan Kraklow and Matthew Jackson are being awarded the **United States**

Lifesaving Association, and California Surf Lifesaving Association's Heroic Act Awards.



Point Loma Boat Rescue – May 2, 2021

On the evening of May 2, 2021, San Diego Lifeguards received a report from a commercial vessel assist company that a vessel had broken up in the vicinity of the Dolphin Tanks area of Point Loma. San Diego Lifeguards responded to the scene with surfboats, personal watercraft, and rescue vehicles. Upon arrival they found a large debris field. Approximately 25 victims were in various stages of extreme danger. Some victims were caught in the debris field, while others were being pulled down by debris caught in the ropes

Mr. Cale Foy, a Good Samaritan, who had been on the beach with family and friends, swam through 6-foot surf, fully clothed, into the debris field, and rescued several victims; one of whom was in critical condition. The critical victim was taken aboard the surfboat, along with Mr. Foy, and transported to the San Diego Harbor Patrol Docks, while CPR efforts were being continued. This victim survived the ordeal due to Mr. Foy's efforts. A total of seven victims were rescued from the water by lifeguards and bystanders. Overall 25 victims were treated and transported to local hospitals. For his selfless act of lifesaving heroism under extreme conditions, Cale Foy was awarded the **United States Lifesaving Association and California Surf Lifesaving Association's Heroic Act Awards.**

For their team rescue effort under extreme conditions, Cale Foy Lieutenant Rick Romero; Sergeant's Mike Cranston and Bruce Jamieson; Life-

guard III's Alan Kraklow, Ben Lewis, Joe Mahoney, Brian Zeller; and Lifeguard II's Chad Carter, David Dupont, Chris Pharo, and Alec Rosen are being awarded the **United States Lifesaving Association's National Lifesaving Award.**



Horseshoe Reef Rescue – May 20, 2021

On the morning of May 20, 2021, San Diego Lifeguards received a report of a vessel off Marine Street Beach with numerous victims in the water. The initial incident had lifeguard personnel responding to the area north of Horseshoe Reef where eight victims were rescued and treated. A secondary response of personnel to an area of South Wipeout Beach resulted in the lifeguard recovering a victim who had been pulled ashore by an unnamed citizen.

The overall result of this multiple response rescue was eight victims rescued, treated, and eventually released. Unfortunately, there was one fatality at the South Wipeout Beach location.

For their team rescue efforts under extreme conditions, Lieutenant Ric Stell; Sergeants Eric Care and Travis Gleason; Lifeguard III's Dustin Fiero, Amber Prestegard, Matthew Jackson, Mark Korch, Alan Kraklow, and James Lockwood; and Lifeguard II's Erik Jones and Thomas Valente are being awarded the **United States Lifesaving Association's National Lifesaving Award.**

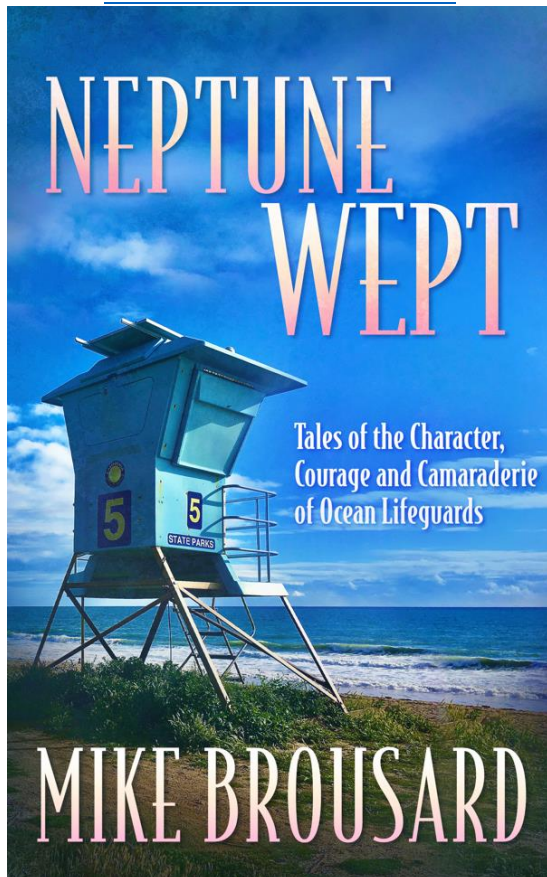


A true story by Mike Brouard, CA State Lifeguard - Retired

Reprinted from Mike Brouard's recently published book "Neptune Wept." Available now on Amazon.

As an encore to his 2018 lifesaving classic, "Warm Winds and Following Seas: Reflections of a Lifeguard in Paradise," Mike Brouard digs into the experiences of lifesavers in a new work that illuminates the depth of the camaraderie shared by the men and women who populate this demanding and dangerous profession. "Neptune Wept" offers a view into some of the lighter moments shared by lifesavers, and ultimately renders a bold perspective on the invasive effects of incidents lifeguards witness and respond to, as well as the struggles they endure in their daily lives to cope with them.

[Available Now on Amazon](#)



Like She was my Own Mother

Like most lifeguards, I started in the trenches working towers and worked my way up to relief guard. After working several years, I was entrusted with duty in a two-man patrol car. As a seasonal and permanent lifeguard, I worked in that capacity for almost 30 years.

One of the last times I was assigned to work a patrol car in the summer was a hot, sunny, crowded August day at San Clemente State Beach in the year 2000. The surf was 6 feet, and we'd been busy. Amongst the eight lifeguards working that day, we'd probably had 60 rescues between us. I was getting on in lifeguard-years - It was my last year working the front lines. I was riding in the patrol jeep with fellow lifeguard Tyrone Vollebregt. At about 2PM, we received a request to back up a multiple victim rescue at the foot of Avenida Calafia, which is adjacent to a large parking lot. Both of the lifeguards in the two towers there were in the water trying to stabilize the situation. We were near Riviera Beach, and swung the car around to head for Calafia, maybe 300 yards away. Because of the large crowd we had to proceed slowly. We could see the guards outside tending to their victims. The rescue boat was on its way. As we approached the scene, we saw something no lifeguard ever wants to see - a group of people dragging an apparently unconscious person out of the water. We flipped on our siren and cleared the crowd.

The victim had been dragged out of the water by her arms with her chest pointed upward and her head flopped back. They plopped her down on the sand. Tyrone jumped out of the car and ran to assess her condition. I got the resuscitator and first aid gear out of the back of the car.

As I started to get the resuscitator ready, the victim's husband told me he'd seen her go over the falls on a large wave, and the next time he saw her, several minutes later, she was floating face down inside the surfline. He deputized a couple of bystanders to help him get her to shore. The lifeguards in the towers had been rescuing others when the incident occurred.

I looked at Ty as he called out "no breath!", and since we suspected a cervical spine injury, I saw

him applying an airway technique known as a jaw thrust, trying unsuccessfully to get breaths into her. I knelt down next to the victim and assessed her pulse. “No pulse,” I said – the cue for us to go into CPR mode. I asked Ty to let me try my luck at getting an airway. We moved into position.

Ty started compressions while I attempted to get breaths in. It was unsuccessful. Being as delicate as I could, I repositioned her head and tried to get a breath in again. No go. I struggled to open her mouth to see if there was an obstruction there, but her jaw was set in such a way that it wouldn't open wide. I was able to sweep her mouth with one finger in an attempt to remove any debris, following the guidelines of the time. Since we weren't getting air into her, Ty stopped compressions and pulled out a plastic airway, and we tried to maneuver it into her throat. We couldn't get the device past her teeth.

Tyrone and I paused for a second. For her to survive, we needed to push oxygen into her lungs or she had no chance to live. The clock was ticking. We looked at each other, knowing instinctively from training and experience that if we didn't take the bull by the horns RIGHT NOW she was going to die in the next few moments there on the sand where we tended to her, on our knees before God and her extended family, who was gathered around watching us. There was no time to vacillate, no time to ask permission, nowhere to hide. Her life was in our hands. Part of a lifesaver's job is to make the tough calls, like this one was. There was no question we would take the risk and manipulate her head to give us a chance to get air into her.

I tilted her head back - and sure enough the first two breaths went in. We had crossed the threshold of normal procedure and entered into the dark arena of chance. I remember thinking 'this is what I would do if it was my own mother lying there.' Ty continued with compressions. After a few minutes, we transitioned to giving her straight oxygen using a bag valve

mask. We continued to try and resurrect her as we heard the distant sound of sirens heading our way. In a minute, we could hear the sirens in the parking lot behind us, and soon the voices of the medics as they came down the stairs on the beach 75 yards away.

Just before the medics got to us, we stopped to assess her, and to our surprise she had a pulse! I pumped a few more breaths into her, and suddenly she was breathing on her own. The medics arrived, saw signs of life and loaded her on a backboard for a trip to the hospital. After the ambulance left, one of the medics came over to us. “Great job, guys. You saved that woman's life.”

Ty and I were flush with success. These were the days before we had defibrillators, so rescuers at our level were confined to rescue breathing, application of oxygen, and CPR in our efforts to revive drowning victims. Until defibrillators were made available to us some years later, reviving a person in full cardiac arrest was very rare. In 30 years as a lifeguard, I'd probably had 20 CPR's and never had a successful one. In our corner of the rescue world, reviving someone in full cardiac arrest was a borderline miracle.

Tyrone and I went back to our vehicle and started to clean up and reorganize our gear. People were coming up to us on the beach and shaking our hands, saying “Great job!” and treating us like heroes. Word spread down the beach. At the towers, our lifeguards came down and high fived us. We were all pumped up. We had saved someone from an untimely demise. There's no finer feeling in this life.

At the end of the day, we returned to the shop to service our equipment; some of our fellow lifeguards were there to greet us and gathered around to hear the story. As much as a drowning casts a pall over a lifeguard service, pulling someone from the clutches of death is an occasion for celebration that lifts the spirits of the entire service. I went home that night floating on

a cloud and recounted the story to my wife. Ty and I had shared our first successful CPR.

I showed up at the lifeguard shop to work a shift the next morning, still on a high from the previous day's action. Anxious to get a disposition on our patient, I called Mission Hospital and asked for the Intensive Care Unit.

An ICU nurse picked up. I explained who I was, that I had participated in the resuscitation of the victim from the beach the day before. I was curious about her condition. "Well, I can't tell you a whole lot," she answered.

"We think she might have been knocked unconscious and drowned," I said. "Did she aspirate any water?"

"Yes, she did, but that's the least of her problems." There was a pause for a few moments, as though she was gauging whether or not I could be trusted with the information. "I know you did what you could, but she suffered a severe neck injury. She's a quadriplegic. The injury prognosis is not good, but she'll probably live....."

You talk about a dagger in the heart.

It was like a body blow. I was numb, sick to my stomach. The previous day's celebration had built up such a high, I felt like I had fallen off a cliff. I sat down and began to second guess our performance. I felt personally responsible for her injury. After about 10 minutes, realizing that my peers were expecting me to pull my weight on what would be another busy day, I got up, checked out my gear and drove to the beach to work my shift.



This event is something I still think about, even after the passage of decades. In that moment, Tyrone Vollebregt and I had made a decision that will have affected the rest of that person's life as well as our own. I've always thought she's probably still out there, alive somewhere. We'll never know if we caused her injury or if it

was already there from having been pitched headfirst down a steep wave. We took the leap of faith and came up short – we live with the consequences. It's easy to beat yourself up over such things, even all these years later. We did what we had to do to preserve her life; that's what lifeguards do.

Lifeguard Recalls Emotional Rescue of Officers in OC Helicopter Crash



*By Lauren Coronado • Published February 22, 2022
• Updated on February 22, 2022 at 10:50 am.*

[Click here for full NBC article and video](#)

An off-duty lifeguard recalls the emotional rescue attempt after a police helicopter with two officers on board crashed into the water in Newport Beach Saturday night.

Andrew Belden was the first person to jump into the water, immediately diving in to try to rescue the officers on board.

"A lifeguard's worst nightmare is someone drowning. The idea is you want to prevent that from happening and when you have the copilot saying, 'Help me, my partner is down there.' You can only do so much. I did the best I could do. I was right there when it crashed. I wish the outcome was different," Belden said.

The 20-year, off-duty Newport Beach lifeguard was just feet away when the Huntington Beach police helicopter spiraled out of control and crashed into the water. One officer was killed and another was injured.

“As I arrived, the first pilot bobbed up and he was screaming, as you could imagine,” Belden recalled. “He just kept saying, ‘please, help my partner, my partner is still down there’.”

He says he pulled the first officer to safety before diving to find [the diseased] officer Nicholas Vella.

Witnesses captured the intense moment on video.



[Click here for full CBS News Los Angeles video](#)

THE MIRACLE at TORREY

San Diego Coast State Lifeguards

“...the notion that Lifeguard Intuition exists”

By Ed Vodrazka



Tower #5 - Torrey Pines State Beach (Nick Yuki: Lifeguard) – Photo: Vodrazka

From the Book: [Stories from Sea Level](#)

The stories I have included in this collection are exceptional events, which is why they were chosen to be preserved in print. I have intentionally avoided embellishing the many facets of these great rescues for the specific reason that they are renderings of non-fiction. They are stories of honor and valor. Fluffing up mediocre rescues dilutes the magnitude and importance of the truly great acts of heroism and simply put, these stories need no exaggeration. The facts stand for themselves and in our line of work, tapping into the collective exploits of dozens of lifeguard agencies, there are plenty of heroic rescues to choose from. We don't need embellishments. But I stop short of referring to them as “miracles.” Miracles are few and far between. Miracles exist in the realm of the divine.

My reference to this rescue as a “miracle” is not ascribed by accident or by embellishment. The details of this event were directly taken from Greg McCord himself. The spontaneous interview was held at a chance meeting above Black's after a surf session, and although it had been 39 years since the event occurred, McCord was brought to tears by the time he reached the end of the story. The event happened at Torrey Pines in 1981. Those who were there still refer this rescue as “The Miracle at Torrey Pines.” Greg McCord was in my rookie academy. He was a serious and responsible kid who was strong in the water. He finished second overall behind a rocket named Peter Spurzem who was a swimming icon at the time. Greg was also a devout Christian. He went to work the San Diego Coast and quickly learned how to proactively manage his water, gaining the respect and admiration of the elder crew. They trusted him and he never failed to live up to his well-earned reputation as a diligent lifeguard. McCord would make hundreds of rescues in his tenure, but one will stand out above all others. The reasons for the immortal status of the event were two-fold. The first was the critical nature of the rescue. The second was that, according to Greg, he had God in his tower. Many veteran lifeguards can recount stories in which intuition played a part in some major event they were involved in. I am sure there are probably a few veteran lifeguards who challenge the notion that Lifeguard Intuition exists, but in my experience, there are far more

who wholeheartedly believe in it. The terms we use to describe that intuition are many. They include “subconscious lifeguarding,” a “sixth sense,” a “premonition,” or even simply a “hunch.” I prefer the term Lifeguard Intuition as it suggests that the lifeguard’s cumulative experience helps to create the foundation for their concern.

But for McCord, there would be no question in his mind that this had little to do with him. This was an act of God and no other. The day was not unlike any other. It was sunny and warm, and a healthy crowd frolicked in the chest high surf at Torrey Pines. The rips were manageable, and the crew had made a handful of rescues before noon. Greg was the relief guard and arrived at Tower #7 to give the lifeguard a break. After a brief exchange with McCord, the guard took his surfboard from the tower and paddled out to catch a few waves while Greg settled in for the hour-long break.

Tower #7 is the northernmost tower on the beach, and, with the exception of a few random swimmers, the bulk of the beach goers were to his south, closer to the huge parking lot. In fact, almost all of the rescues out of Tower #7 were to the south and the few occurring north were generally within 50 yards of the tower. Almost instantly upon arriving at the tower, McCord felt a sense of unease. Something was wrong. Tower #6 was closed and as always Tower #5, one of the busiest towers in the county, had a healthy crop of swimmers. Greg stood up and double checked the water in front of 5, but the guard was sitting in his chair and his buoy was still hanging. As often happens, the two guards made visual contact with each other. Seeing McCord standing, the Tower #5 guard (a four-year veteran) tapped his head with his right fist, signaling to McCord that all was well. McCord returned the signal and slowly sat back down as everything seemed to be okay. But Greg’s sense of angst increased. Again, he stood on the deck and actively scrutinized each and every swimmer to make certain they all were OK. Everyone was fine. With the exception of a few swimmers, and a passing pod of dolphins, McCord’s water was clear. He turned his gaze to the north of his tower. He didn’t have a single swimmer there. He

picked up his binos and continued his scan as far as he could see to the north. There, past the border, in Del Mar’s water, something caught his eye. From almost a mile away, they looked like two little specks offshore. Those specks could have been seagulls resting on the water, or perhaps lobster buoys. But the moment he spotted them, his heart started racing and he realized they were the source of his fatalistic intuition. McCord would later describe that sensation as an “overwhelmingly powerful calling” to go to them. Despite the fact the two objects were almost a full-mile away, and in truth, he had no idea what they actually were, McCord made the bold decision to call in an emergency response. The Jeep, operated by veteran lifeguard Stu Leisk, was just pulling onto the beach at Tower #5 when the call went out. Leisk raced over to McCord’s tower and as he approached, McCord jumped off the deck with buoy and fins and hopped onto the back bumper of the Jeep. He barked to Leisk that there was a “critical two-person rescue to the north” and Leisk sped off with McCord hanging off the back. As they flew across the sand Leisk scanned the water for the victims and saw none. “Where are they Greg?!” he yelled. “Farther north” replied McCord, not absolutely certain himself of what they were responding to. Leisk again scanned the water. “There’s no one in the water at all!” he chimed. “What are you looking at McCord? McCord’s credibility hung in the balance. If he was wrong, he would look like a fool, not only losing face, but also the elder’s trust. McCord doubled down. “It’s way north Stu...past the border in Del Mar’s water” retorted McCord, trying to sound confident.



“PAST THE BORDER?! ARE YOU KIDDING ME McCORD?! THAT’S A MILE AWAY!”

Realizing the distance he needed to cover, Leisk pulled the Jeep down onto the hard-packed berm and increased his speed northward, shifting into third gear and even accelerating into fourth, exceeding the stated speed limit in the emergency vehicle operator's manual by a long shot. As they sped along a full mile of barren beach, Leisk noted that the speedometer needle reached an unnerving 55 mph. McCord tried to spot the black specks while holding on for dear life, reminiscent of the opening scene of a TV show in the '70s called Rat Patrol. Eventually, McCord spotted the two objects in a large rip, still unidentifiable even though they were only 300 yards away. They could be humans, but they also could be balloons, buoys, or birds. Leisk then saw them too and a moment later it was Leisk who first yelled out,



Stu Leisk

"TWO VICTIMS, GREG! GET READY TO GO!"

Leisk stopped the Jeep hard on the berm adjacent to the rip and McCord sprinted from the back as if their lives depended on him. They did. Two girls, both 13-year-olds, had been pulled offshore in a daunting rip current. It was obvious to the lifeguards they were exhausted, plodding on the surface with their arms barely clearing the water and their heads shifting from side to side. By then they were several hundred yards from shore and were being pulled even farther seaward. Greg chose to enter directly into the feeder of the rip, sprinting through the surf in the direction of the offshore victims. Leisk made a quick radio call declaring "both guards out," then grabbed his buoy and fins and ran out chasing McCord, leaving the Jeep unattended. It would be a career event for both lifeguards but the verdict on life and death was still very much in the balance. McCord approached the first girl who was struggling mightily. She was drowning. Her

head was low in the water, she was unable to remain afloat.

Her eyes were wide open and begging him to save her, and every instinct in his lifeguard soul implored him to reach back, grab his buoy and slide it under her arms to relieve her from her struggle. But for the first time in his career, he swam past an actively drowning victim...because her friend, 50 yards farther out, was in even worse shape. He swam past the girl, so close that he could smell the alcohol on her breath. He yelled to her, "Hold on! My partner is coming for you!" Leisk too was an exceptional swimmer and was close behind. He grabbed his buoy and slid it in under the victim's arms, then clipped her in. She would survive. Her friend, however, was in bad shape. Swimming head up as fast as he had ever swam in his life, from 20 yards away McCord witnessed an apparent tragedy as slowly, quietly, and without sufficient energy left to even make a splash, the girl, unable to continue her struggle, gently slipped under the water. After spotting the two victims from that incredible distance away, then racing recklessly over a mile of beach, and sprinting out to them, it appeared that he would lose his victim by a matter of seconds. With his gaze riveted at the last seen point" and the rippling of the water, which quickly dissipated, McCord sprinted directly to the spot and dove down. In the clear water he saw her lifeless body sinking downward. He grabbed her by her armpits and pulled her unconscious body back to the surface. He then propped her head back, placed his mouth over hers and blew a full breath into her lungs. Then he blew another. With his ear held close to her mouth, he distinctly heard the sound of an inhale, followed by an exhale. She was breathing. Her gaze was distant and initially she was unable to respond to Greg's voice. But gradually she started blinking then looking around. Like her friend, she wreaked of alcohol. But she was alive. The lifeguards pulled the young girls in together. There was no one there to offer any fanfare or applause.

But they both realized they had saved the two girls' lives. As they plodded through the waist-deep water supporting their victims' weight, Leisk looked to McCord and said, "I don't know

how in God’s name you saw them Greg...but that really was a miracle.” The girls were transported to the parking lot where they were delivered to the awaiting medics. They confessed that they had stolen booze from their parents’ liquor cabinet. They were taken to Scripps Memorial for overnight observation. McCord and Leisk went back to the business of lifeguarding. But the glow they felt would last them the rest of the day, the summer, and ultimately for years afterward.



Greg McCord

Months later, at a Christian “Young Life” gathering, McCord, a youth pastor, stood up and started to share that story to a large crowd of kids. To McCord, the profound sense of unease and the certainty that he needed to respond to the rescue was, to him an unmistakable manifestation of divine intervention and God’s love. He took no credit for the rescue, giving all of the glory to God. He continued with the story and eventually reached the climax where the girl had slipped below the water. Just then a dull shriek erupted from the back of the hall that was loud enough to cause him to stop. Others turned their heads to see if someone had been hurt. Greg hustled back to help. Seeing a young girl crumpled on the ground, initially he had thought that she might be having a seizure, but as he got closer he saw that she had her head in her hands, and was sobbing inconsolably. The girl had been listening to McCord’s story and hadn’t recognized him until he had reached the point at which the victim lost consciousness and had submerged under the water. It was her. After recovering from her foolish brush with death, she

had a bold epiphany and had come to God to start a new life. She had never expected to see her guardian angel again.



A Quick Look at the Encinitas Lifeguards

Host of the Spring 2022 CSLSA BOD Meeting

The Encinitas Lifesaving Association is a nonprofit (501-C3 tax exempt) organization chartered to promote beach safety awareness and professional open-water lifesaving standards. We share the mission, goals, and objectives of the CSLSA. The CSLSA (west coast region) is one of seven regions of the United States Lifesaving Association (USLA) which in turn is affiliated to the International Lifesaving Association (ILS).

Affiliated Agencies:

City of Encinitas Fire Department Marine Safety Division

- **Creation:** 1991
- **Shoreline Guarded:** 3.5 Miles
- **Permanent Lifeguards:** 6
- **Seasonal Lifeguards:** 65
- **Rescues 2021:** 1185
- **Junior Lifeguards 2021:** 1418

Lifeguard services are provided by the Marine Safety Division of the Encinitas Fire Department for the 3.5 miles of state beaches managed by the city. Traditional services include providing safety information to the public, preventative public safety, mitigation of safety hazards on the beach, open and under-water rescues, first-aid, animal rescues and dead animal removal. Due to Encinitas topography, lifeguards also effect cliff rescues. In addition, there are lifeguards certified in swiftwater rescue that deploy countywide. Other duties include beach maintenance, bluff monitoring, crowd control, special event staffing, animal control, code enforcement.

Chief Lifeguard:

Captain Lifeguard David Brown

dbrown@encinitasca.gov

For Agency information: www.encintaslg.com