

Official Newsletter  
of the  
California Surf Lifesaving  
Association

The **CALSURF**

V o l u m e 1 5   N o . 2



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On the Cover: Full moon over Norfolk Pine, Whangarei Heads, New Zealand. By Morgan McGowan

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## 2011 CALENDAR

- 4/28-30 USLA Mtg. - Kill Devil Hills, NC
- 7/23 CSLSA Regionals - San Diego
- July 30 Taplin Relays - Redondo Beach
- 8/3 -5 USLA Nationals - Cape May, NJ
- 10/13-14 CSLSA Fall Mtg. - LACO Lakes
- 11/3-5 USLA Fall Mtg. - Maui, HI

## COMMITTEE CHAIRS

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

## CAL SURF MAGAZINE

Cal Surf News Magazine  
*is the official publication of the  
California Surf Lifesaving Association*

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**Richard Godino – L.A. City**

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**Morgan McGowan - Huntington City**  
**Rodney Williamson - L.A. City**

**Marketing and Promotion**  
**Scott Hubbell – L.A. County**

## ARTICLES NEEDED!

Agency Profiles / How to Articles  
California Lifeguard History  
Junior Lifeguard Stories / Unusual Rescues

Submit online to [newsletter@cslsa.org](mailto:newsletter@cslsa.org)

The CSLSA is a non-profit organization incorporated in the State of California. Its principle goals are water safety, education, and the promotion of professional lifeguarding standards. These goals are accomplished through beach safety presentations to school groups, educational exchange programs with members of the International Lifesaving Federation and participation in regional and national competitions.

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

### MIKE BEUERLEIN

Beach visitors are returning to California's shores to seek refuge from the heat, trusting professional lifeguards to protect their safety. Once again, government agencies continue to struggle as a result of our depressed economy. Budgets have been slashed, towers have been closed, tryouts have been canceled, hiring has been frozen, pay has been cut, personnel have been furloughed and positions have been eliminated. And yet, the permanent lifeguards who remain, are welcoming those seasonal lifeguards who are allowed to return, to once again do more with less, and accept the challenge to fulfill our public safety mission.

So fight on we will. Why? *Because that's what we do!* We are part of a noble profession and families depend on us to use our unique skills and resourcefulness to educate, prevent and rescue. The California Surf Lifesaving Association is dedicated to promoting professional lifesaving standards and beach safety awareness. Your CSLSA Executive Board is committed to our mission and representing our members to the United States Lifesaving Association.

Since the last edition of the *Cal Surf News*, the CSLSA Executive Board attended the Fall 2010 USLA Meeting in Portland, Oregon. USLA has helped develop a number of exciting resources to help lifeguards do their job. I invite you to go to the USLA website ([www.usla.org](http://www.usla.org)) to discover the United States Lifeguard Standards Coalition, the National Park Service Web Ranger Program, the USLA Annual Report and past minutes from USLA Meetings.

The 2010-11 CSLSA Executive Board has already met three times this year and continues to work hard on behalf of our members. Like government agencies and private companies, CSLSA has implemented cost containment strategies. Executive Board Meeting costs

have been reduced, fewer members of our Executive Board have been traveling to USLA Meetings and some CSLSA Committee Chairs will have their travel costs paid from committee funds or budgets.

CSLSA continues to look for revenue streams. In 2010, the 1st *Rock Bottom Brewery Foundation Fundraiser* netted \$3,034 for public education and was a tremendous success. This year, we are adding *Tidelines* personal calendars to our fundraising line-up.

After more three decades of service to the lifesaving community, Gus Avila retired as a Supervising Ranger with California State Parks. On January 20th, I attended Mr. Avila's retirement dinner and was honored to present him with a CSLSA Award of Appreciation for his pro bono work as legal advisor to CSLSA.

### **Budgets have been slashed, towers closed, tryouts canceled, hiring frozen, pay cut, personnel furloughed and positions eliminated.**

Bill Humphreys has drafted an outstanding Public Education Brochure for USLA with a universal message (i.e. rip currents, swim near a lifeguard, etc.) for the main body of the brochure, but also containing a section dedicated to the USLA. This USLA specific section will be replaceable with regional information should a region such as ours decide to create their own brochure based on the USLA template.

Our Competition and Junior Lifeguard Committees have been developing a policy for hosting our CSLSA Regional Championships to address specific financial and operational details.

Special thanks to Scott Hubbell once again for his sponsorship. He provided critical funding to allow the 2010 California Surf Lifesaving Championships to

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succeed. As always, Scott is toiling hard to supply our membership kits and fund the 2011 regional competitions.

The 2011 National Championships will be held in Cape May, New Jersey and the 2012 USLA National Lifeguard Championships return to the West Coast. At our last meeting, the CSLSA Competition Committee voted unanimously to support LACOLA's bid to host with Venice or Santa Monica as venue options.

**We are part of a noble profession and families depend on us to use our unique skills and resourcefulness to educate, prevent and rescue.**

## HELP WANTED

### RICHARD GODINO

Our annual competitions are not only important for networking and camaraderie, but they are part of the legacy of our founding as a national lifesaving association. The annual competitions that our regional and national associations present take a tremendous amount of work.. From the Competition Committee, which plans the event and selects the site, to the management team that puts it all together from check-in to scoring and announcing, to the host agency which sets up the site, informs the public and lifeguards the event, to the officiating crew which runs and oversees all the events, a lot of effort goes into holding a competition.

For years now, with very little change, particularly at our Regional event, the same people have been doing most of this: Charlotte Graham and Gordon Gray run the check-in; Jay Butke oversees the set-up; Rob McGowan does the announcing; and Bob Moore and Bill Richardson officiate. Other people jump in to help with those tasks as well as keeping score, setting up

CSLSA is excited to be back in Los Angeles County for the Spring 2011 Board of Director's Meeting. I would like to thank Chief Mike Frazer and LACOLA for once again volunteering to host our members. The CSLSA Executive Board is excited to host the **Lifeguard Budget Summit: Lifesaving in the New Economy** in conjunction with this meeting.

At the end of April, the CSLSA Executive Board will be in the Outer Banks of North Carolina representing our members at the USLA Meeting in Kitty Hawk.

Let's hope, that in 2011, our agencies are properly staffed with the lifeguards and resources we need to continue our outstanding safety record of protecting the families that entrust their lives in our hands.

each event and monitoring the start and finish lines.

After competing and spectating for years, I decided to jump in and help last year. I joined the officiating crew, along with Morgan McGowan, to help Bob and Bill out on the beach and surf line. It was a hard day of work to be sure, but it gave me a different perspective on the events, and it was also a lot of fun.

So please, if you are planning on going to watch, or even if you are planning to compete in a few events, consider helping out in some capacity while you are there. Consult with me or any of the people mentioned to see what you can do to be part of the group that brings these great competitions to lifeguards here and abroad.



Bob Moore at Nationals



Bill Richardson at work

# PROJECT ECUADOR 2011

## RODNEY WILLIAMSON

*Rodney and other California lifeguards of Project Ecuador developed and ran a lifeguard academy in Montanita that recently graduated 23 new lifeguards. They then moved to Esmeraldas to train more lifeguards. He is also Vice President of the Los Angeles City Lifeguard Association. He and his wife recently built a house in Ecuador. What follows are excerpts from his periodic reports on the progress of making the shores of Ecuador safe for beachgoers.*

March 3 - Lifeguards and friends,

Things are going quite well here in Esmeraldas. As I write this we are on a bus on our way to Mompiche (the second longest wave in South America) for our second day of training. With Project Ecuador volunteers from Newport Beach, Los Angeles County, and Los Angeles City, we are training 16 lifeguards from various Ecuadorian agencies. We have gone over the basics of lifeguarding including responsibilities, watching the water, prevention, and rescues. This group is very different than the group that just completed the Lifeguard Academy in Montanita. This group consists mostly of volunteers who are comfortable in the water but are not very good swimmers. There are various possible reasons for this lack of swimming ability. There is not much surfing in Esmeraldas and there is not a culture of water fitness. So we are re-evaluating what we want to accomplish here given the limited time that we have and the people that we have to work with. We don't want people watching the water who are a danger to themselves and others, but we need to find an efficient way for people that meet a minimum standard of proficiency to prevent and make rescues. Our preferred method in California is a buoy and fins, but there are other ways to make rescues. We are going to concentrate today on making rescues with rescue boards as it is fast and safe for both rescuer and victim. But a rescue board can still present issues for people who have a problem balancing the board. With this in mind Bruce Moncreif will be working with the trainees on a potentially useful method of

using a body board for rescues. We have come full circle on our expectations for what we can currently accomplish here in Esmeraldas. As we have little control here, it is impossible to have a professional lifeguard academy, but it is possible to raise the standard. There is no cookie-cutter format for training in Ecuador.



Thinking outside the box – Body board rescue tools

This is an interesting and challenging situation. The real question is how to make the beaches safer in the third world by providing training and equipment for lifeguards with limited ability and resources. We will try to come up with some solutions and recommendations. We have been warmly received here and had a private meeting with the mayor of Esmeraldas who was very gracious. He has invited us to dinner and a special private performance by some of the entertainers who will be performing here at Carnival. We are having GREAT time!



California Lifeguards with the Esmeraldas Mayor

I am happy to report that the more proficient lifeguards are catching on quickly and doing well with the standard rescue buoy training.

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March 13 - Lifeguards and friends,

I am proud to announce the graduation in the Comuna de Montanita of 23 lifeguards and 5 lifeguard instructors from the Project Ecuador Lifeguard Academy. The ceremony was held Saturday night in the Casa de Comuna in Montanita. As usual here, this was not the original plan. Our ceremony was originally scheduled for Friday night, but the tsunami warning changed our plan. The President of Ecuador ordered the entire coast evacuated. Montanita was a ghost town as we spent the night in the mountains. I thought our hopes for a ceremony at this time were dashed, as I leave on Monday, but lifeguards showed up at my house at 4:30 p.m. with plans to have the graduation at 7:00 p.m. We quickly reorganized for a graduation that didn't actually start until 9:00 p.m. (the only thing that starts on time here is rookie school).

With friends, family, and the Presidente of the comuna in attendance, letters of congratulation were read by Paul Dunning, Chris Brewster, and Long Beach Sister Cities. Speeches were given by Lionel del Pezo, Luis Velez, and myself. Uniforms and diplomas were handed out and photos were taken. This was an important moment in the history of Ecuador as this is the first class of lifeguards from an academy conforming to ILS standards. I believe that this group of lifeguards forms the nucleus from which the profession will grow in the country of Ecuador. I feel proud of them.



## NEW ZEALAND EXCHANGE

### MORGAN MCGOWAN

In an attempt to further my lifesaving career and have an amazing winter abroad in New Zealand, I applied to go on the thirty-eighth annual California – New Zealand educational lifeguard exchange. It all started one summer day after work when I finally got around to asking for letters of recommendation from my supervisors. After putting the rest of the application together all I had to worry about was the interview. The interview finally came, and I felt confident that I would be heading to New Zealand for our winter. I was chosen to represent the CSLSA in New Zealand this year, which is an honor and an amazing experience. I didn't really know what I was in for, but after talking to past exchange delegates, I thought I had a better idea of what to expect. Well I was sure mistaken, and now that the exchange has come to an end I'd like to share some of my most memorable experiences.

After a long fourteen-hour flight, I finally arrived in Auckland to the warm welcome of Ash and Slim, last year's kiwi delegates to California. The next morning, I was off to Muriwai to do rock-rescue training. Before I knew it I was jumping off the Sugar Loaf which,

is a tricky rock jump because the cliff face extends out near the bottom. This requires perfect timing so you get tossed away from the cliff by a wave allowing you to clear the cliff face below. After a day of playing around on the rocks my fingers were cut up but I learned a lot! Coming into this training, I had limited rock experience since I guard at Huntington Beach which has no rocks to speak of.

While at Bethells Beach, I participated in Intermediate Guard training in the Bethells caves. Again I had very limited caving experience, but I tagged along for the adventure that was a great way to spend early morning hours before patrol. Imagine being confined in a small space with no light and waves breaking while trying to find your way around. It was quite disorientating, but very enjoyable at the same time. There was a little more significance behind this training because a rock fisherman was swept off the rocks by a wave and ended up in one of the caves a few weeks prior to the training session.

Not all the excitement was had at the beach. For New Year's Eve I headed up to the Coromandel Peninsula for the Coral Gold Music Festival. Ash was nice enough to arrange tickets to one of New Zealand's most popular New Year's Eve parties, where several kiwi bands played throughout the night.

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One of the most educational experiences was had while visiting the place where the Treaty of Waitangi was signed. There I learned an abundance of information about how New Zealand gained its independence. Another educational day was spent in Wellington at Te Papa, the national museum of New Zealand. A day of fun and excitement was had in Rotorua where I flew down the tracks in luge karts and rolled down a hill in an inflatable hamster ball, also known as the zorb.



Morgan ready for the Zorb

Another adrenaline rush was had while visiting Piha where I jumped off the coffin. This rock jump gets its name because the landing zone isn't much larger than the size of a coffin. While in Ruakaka during a low tide and an onshore breeze, I tried my luck at blow karting, which is pretty much a tricycle with a sail on it. Along the way I've had many instances where I could have severely hurt myself, but that was particularly the case when the Whangarei Heads crew took me up Mt. Mania. At times I was scaling a rock face with a sheer drop off on a ledge that was barely wide enough to fit my feet.

There were several long days of patrol where very little happened, but then there were the days with non-stop action. As soon as I arrived in Raglan I was given a uniform and sent down on flags to protect the public. Since I've never guarded at a beach that uses flags I wasn't exactly sure what to do besides watch the water. While on flags you are responsible for setting up at the flags at the safest place to swim and to make sure all the swimmers stay between the flags. With the outgoing tide and the shoulder high surf, I spent several hours on in-water flag duty corralling everyone into the flags. Unfortunately Raglan's world famous points weren't breaking when I was there for the official part of the

exchange so I made sure to come back. A month later sure made a difference; I enjoyed head-high, perfect lefts for two weeks straight. While back in Raglan to surf, I still made sure to help out on the weekends with the volunteer patrol, especially since I was staying at the surf club for free. One Saturday while crewing in the IRB, I made about a half dozen mass rescue pick-ups in the span of fifteen minutes. When things calmed down a little, I got to practice my IRB driving in large surf.

Fortunately the typical day of patrol was a little slower than the fifteen minutes of pandemonium described above. Some days there were no rescues to be had because the beach was closed. While at Mangawhai Heads, there was a typhoon moving onshore bringing howling winds, large messy surf, and buckets of rain so the beach was closed due to hazardous conditions. This didn't stop people from attempting to enter the water so I kept busy informing people that the beach was closed.

The second time I was at a closed beach was in Sunset. This time it was due to multiple confirmed shark sightings in the surrounding area. There were only a hand full of people in the water, and word spread fast so there really wasn't anyone left in the water to kick out. All that was left to do was fly the beach closed flag and put the shark sign up.

By no means did I have one favorite surf club because they all had something different to offer, but I can say that my most memorable experience while in the beautiful country of New Zealand was participating in the Six Surf Lifeguards Viaduct finish. After 34 days and traveling over 5,200 Km in 3.8-meter inflatable rescue boats (IRB), the Six Surf Lifeguards successfully circumnavigated both islands of New Zealand. On their final leg there were over a dozen IRB's, along with a few Coast Guards boats, and two tugboats escorting them into Auckland's Viaduct where thousands of on-lookers welcomed them home. I was lucky enough to be in one of the support IRBs. That was a very memorable experience. Congratulations to the six surf lifeguards on their safe and successful journey around the country.

Another highlight of the trip was watching the nine days of surf sports competition at Mt. Maunganui. Known as the Festival of Surf Sport, this is one of the largest and longest lasting ocean competitions ever hosted by New Zealand. There were teams from New Zealand, Australia, Japan, Canada and the United Kingdom, along with

[NEW ZEALAND EXCHANGE, from page 7

teams from almost all the surf clubs in New Zealand. Three of the nine days was international competition, where Australia took home the gold. The other six days of competition were between the various surf clubs of New Zealand. There were your usual surf races, swim board, ski, but then there were the ones that I wasn't too familiar with like the IRB and five-man surf boat races.

As this was an educational exchange, I'd like to thank all the New Zealand lifeguards who shared their knowledge with me along the way. Initially it was about dealing with the scorching black sand and was how to safely get onto some rocks to do a rock jump. Along the way I learned so much: why they use flagged swimming areas, how to perform rock rescues, how to drive an IRB, and finally why we should have surf clubs. Sometimes it's nice to enjoy a beer with your colleagues after a long days work or simply have a place to sleep for the night on the beach. The accommodations might not be five-star, but the location sure is, and this is just a few of the reasons why I think California should adopt the surf club culture. There was a lot to take in, but some of the most useful information that I will bring back and share was learned when helping out with Beach Education at the various beaches. Beach Ed is a daylong course where a local school comes out to the surf club to learn some basic beach safety and play a few games. As a Junior Guard Instructor, I will make

sure to incorporate some of the concepts and games from Beach Ed into my lesson plans this summer.

Finally I would like to thank everyone who made my trip to New Zealand the best it could be. First off I'd like to thank every New Zealand lifeguard I met while over there; you were always so helpful and accommodating. Without the CSLSA organizing and keeping the exchange going for the past thirty-eight years, along with helping fund my trip, I would have never made it over to New Zealand this winter. Obviously a trip half way around the world doesn't come without some substantial costs, so thanks to Seal Beach's AJ Summers Memorial Fund and my own association, HBSLSA, for mitigating my out of pocket expenses.

While in New Zealand I had many life-changing experiences, but being in the country for their "darkest day," the Christchurch earthquake, really struck home. Thankfully I was not directly affected by the quake, but keep the victims in my thoughts and prayers. If you'd like to see more photos or a more in-depth account of my trip, take a look at the blog I created for the exchange:

<http://www.cslsa-nz.blogspot.com/>.



The author on duty at Raglans



Morgan (l) and Marcos on flag duty