

Newport Beach Lifeguards perform high speed surf rescue in summer of 1999

Inside the Cal Surf

<i>President's Message</i>	2
<i>Water Quality Issues Pose High Risk-</i>	3
<i>CSLSA Heroic Acts</i>	4
<i>State LG's Visit Salvavidas de Acapulco</i>	4
<i>New Tradition at Del Mar Annual Recheck</i>	6
<i>Landline?</i>	7
<i>Club Tortuga Officials Sign Agreement</i>	8
<i>Yo Ho Ho at Code Three</i>	8
<i>Buddy Belshe Honored</i>	9
<i>Female Lifeguards</i>	10
<i>Camp Pendleton LG Service Educates</i>	11
<i>Competition Update</i>	11
<i>Agency Profile - Imperial Beach</i>	13
<i>Junior Lifeguard Training Works!</i>	14
<i>New Zealand Exchange</i>	16

*Judith Dee Bowman
1941- 1999*

This issue is dedicated to Judith Dee Bowman, wife of Max Bowman (retired Community Services Director Huntington Beach and former President of World Life Saving). Judith perished aboard Egypt Air when it crashed into the Atlantic Ocean on Oct. 31, 1999. Judith is survived by her husband Max, her three children and seven grandchildren.

Fellow CSLSA Members and Lifeguard Professionals

By Steve Long, CSLSA President

My name is Steve Long and this past October I was elected to the office of President of the Southwest Region of the United States Lifesaving Association. My lifesaving career began thirty five years ago in the inland community pools of Southern California. I became a full time lifeguard for California State Parks at Huntington State Beach in 1974, promoting further south to the San Clemente - San Onofre State Beaches in 1978. At that time I attended my first CSLSA meeting and encountered an eclectic group of individuals who were dedicated to crafting an organization that sought to boost the professional image of lifeguards; identify the reasonable aquatic safety standards that communities should strive to achieve; develop safety messages that would be the backbone of a public education campaign; all the while celebrating our unique combination of skills and strength through athletic competition and social interaction. There were lifeguard legends in those sessions and I developed a profound respect for the dedication of those who gave well beyond the call of duty to their own agencies and associations.

I remained a somewhat passive participant in this organization until 1992 when State Parks underwent reorganization, and lifeguard services were threatened with serious reductions. At that time I came to realize that the community of lifesavers had better pull together, and start commu-

nicating with each other like never before, in order to protect our individual and collective gains. Almost no agency was immune to the distress of a weakened economy in the mid-1990's, and many witnessed dramatic change during that period. In 1995 I was temporarily assigned to bring a team of lifeguards onto LA County Beaches, as politicians wrangled over property issues that should never have been allowed to threaten public safety on those beaches. Fortunately, the lines of communication among individual lifeguards and agency chiefs were opening, and that particular situation was resolved after monumental efforts by many. At the close of that endeavor, I spoke at a CSLSA meeting, offering my view that lifeguards should never find themselves as adversaries again; that the lines of communication should always remain open, and that the collective focus of every lifeguard should be

professional service to those who visit our beaches

As LIFE GUARDS we have a sacred trust to use our knowledge and skill to insure a safe day at the beach for everyone who enters our domain. We must work as a team despite geographic or political differences; continuing the work in progress and diligently guarding our gains. I challenge every lifeguard to become connected, to page 12....

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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.

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Dwight Crum Passes Away

Dwight Crum, former Deputy Director of the L.A. County Lifeguard Service and a founding member of the USLA, passed away on February 27, just as this issue of the 'Cal Surf News' was being finalized. The next issue will be dedicated in his memory, and will contain an article on his life and career.

Water Quality Issues Pose High Risk for Guards

By Ken Kramer, California State Parks

New standards close beaches and raise concerns about lifeguard safety and closure policies.

Summer beach crowds got way more than they bargained for this year along Orange County's beaches. Bright yellow "beach closed" signs, hypodermic needles, and mysterious waterborne bacteria greeted disappointed visitors for much of the summer.

The beach closure struck just before the Fourth of July weekend at Huntington State Beach and lasted nearly three months. The closure eventually spread to much of the city's coastline while health department officials searched for the elusive source of bacteria. After an exhaustive and costly effort, officials are still puzzled by the high counts and are now pointing towards urban runoff as the primary suspect.

The worst part of the Huntington Beach closure is the sad fact that it is not likely to be the last. On a positive note, there has never been such massive local public awareness of the vital role clean water plays to our way of life. As pressure on the environment increases from exploding coastal development, the threat of sewage and contaminated urban runoff reaching our oceans, bays, lakes, and rivers increases proportionally.

While these closures erode the public's confidence to safely recreate in our waters, they also damage the treasured image of a healthy California Beach community. Perhaps most importantly though, they pose a real and serious health concern for the lifeguards and aquatic safety person-

nel responsible for managing them.

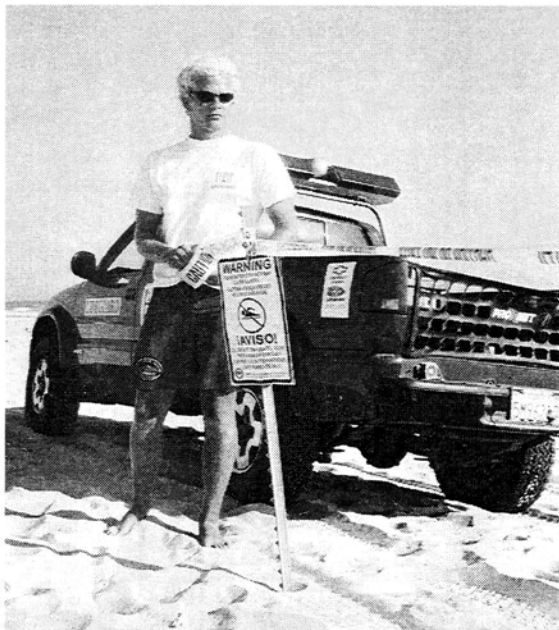
In order to safeguard it's employees and ensure public safety, ***operational policy must send a clear message*** that ALL water quality closures will be consistently and strictly enforced. This includes adequate posting, press releases, public education, high visibility patrol, and, when necessary, citation and physical arrest to prevent water contact.

If these steps are not taken, lifeguards and other aquatic safety personnel may be exposed to health risks in the event that an aquatic rescue is required. In this case, an employer faces the possibility of increased liability exposure, while the employee may suffer lifelong medical problems.

As a result, the CSLSA is providing these guidelines for managers and administrators to consider.

- ◆ Penal Code section 409.5 provides the legal authority for lifeguards to enforce closures issued by the county health department.
- ◆ Where applicable, local ordinances should be updated to include health department issued water quality closures.
- ◆ Due to elevated and unhealthy levels of bacteria, fertilizers, road oils, animal waste and litter, employees should be cautioned not to have water contact near storm drains, and outlets of creeks and rivers during and after rain events.
- ◆ Employees engaged in flood or storm related aquatic rescue response should be issued approved protective equipment such as dry suits, etc.....
- ◆ Employees exposed to possibly contaminated water should immediately seek appropriate medical treatment and follow established reporting procedures.
- ◆ Additional information regarding water quality closures and beach advisories may be obtained by contacting local county health care agencies.

Huntington Beach Lifeguard Nick Spruil tapes off a section of beach closed during the summer of 1999 water contamination that affected a portion of City Beach and a large portion of Huntington State Beach for most of the summer season. Officials said the source of the contamination was attributed to storm drain runoff, although the last time Orange County received "one inch of rainfall in a single day" occurred in March of 1998.



CSLSA Heroic Acts

By Steve Long,
California State Parks

The USLA Medal of Valor was presented to four San Diego City Lifeguards in an August 1999 ceremony before the San Diego City Council. USLA President Bill Richardson bestowed the awards to Lifeguard Sergeant Bob Albers, Lifeguard III David Rains, Lifeguard II Laine Pepper and Lifeguard Ed Harris. The Medals were presented for their efforts in rescuing two boaters from a life-threatening situation involving a distressed vessel floundering in ten-foot seas and 25 knot winds, just outside the surfline near the Ocean Beach fishing pier on April 28 of 1999. Albers and Raines responded by rescue boat through the closed out Mission Bay Channel. Pepper and Harris ran onto the pier, leaping thirty feet to the water, swimming to assist Raines who had swum from the rescue boat. The victims abandoned ship as a large set approached. The guards assisted them onto the rescue boat, which took a large wave over the bow as the crew had boarded. The abandoned sailboat was then catapulted into the pier pilings where it was pulverized. This award was approved in the spring USLA Board Meeting in Santa Rosa, Ca.

Medal of Valor: A red, white and blue service ribbon was approved for award with all Medals of Valor. The San Diego guards were the first recipients of these ribbons.

Heroic Acts on USLA Website: Research continues on completing the list of recipients of all USLA Heroic Act Awards. A short summary of each incident may eventually be included. Two Medal of Valor Lifeguards, David Carter and Don Straub, will be added to the current listing for their September 1991 boat rescue. This Sonoma Coast rescue occurred in 49-degree to page 16...

State Lifeguards Visit Salvavidas de Acapulco

By Ken Kramer, California State Parks

State Lifeguards launch International Exchange program. Week-long training visit just in time for huge vacation resort crowds.

Each year between Thanksgiving and Christmas millions of sun seeking vacationers flood the Mexican resort city of Acapulco. Located on the Pacific coast of the southern State of Guerrero, Acapulco's warm water and tropical climate attract visitors from throughout the Americas and the world.

But lurking just below the surface of this inviting destination is a chilling detail that few tourists know. According to estimates, on average a dozen people drown in the waters near Acapulco every year. Many of these drownings occur after hours, in remote areas, and are alcohol related. As is the case in many parts of the world, the only safeguard against this grim danger is a handful of dedicated professionals known as "Salvavidas." The "Salvavidas", translated into English as "Lifesavers", deal with many budgetary challenges including limited equipment, and minimal staffing and training. The Acapulco Salvavidas are paid the equivalent of about \$6.00 US per day.

This past summer, after being contacted by a retired Texan doctor living in Acapulco, the CSLSA began exploring the idea of participating in a formal training and exchange program designed to improve lifesaving and foster good will on an international level. With support from the Association, the Acapulco Tourist Office, the Director of Acapulco Beach Services, and many other organizations and individuals, three state lifeguards flew to Acapulco for an intense and rewarding exchange visit. Representing CSLSA, and volunteering their time, were Orange Coast District lifeguards **Gus Avila, Al Pepito, and Al Fimlaid.**

This first exchange visit was a combination scouting mission and training session. The CSLSA guards were met by representatives of the Beach Services Administration and housed at the Fiesta Americana Hotel on Condesa beach. They arrived with a cache of donated lifesaving gear such as rescue tubes and can buoys, swim fins, uniform shorts and shirts, patches, rescue tube key chains, rescue bags and rescue jerseys. They also brought Spanish version public education trading cards and training materials translated into Spanish to share with their counterparts.

The USLA training manual was the basis for a 15-hour training course that was given twice each day during a morning and afternoon session. Course highlights included aquatic safety lectures and demonstrations, practical exercises, and plenty of hands-on activities related to ocean safety and rescue techniques. An intense, head high shorebreak combined with strong surge action in the bay created a surprisingly challenging training site complete with moving rip currents that pulled more than fifty yards from shore. Every one of the 80 Salvavidas participated enthusiastically in the training, and all said they appreciated and benefited from the course. They were awarded CSLSA course completion certificates during a final-day graduation ceremony. During the course evaluation many of the Salvavidas expressed the sincere hope that this training and exchange program can be repeated annually.

The Salvavidas are employed by the Director of Beach Services, a governmental agency known in Spanish by the acronym "PASPZOFEMAT (Promotora y Administradora de Servicios de Playa, Zona Federal Maritima Terrestre). And we thought *California Department of Parks and Recreation* was a mouthful! **Pedro Camacho Lopez** is the coordinator of to page 5....

State Lifeguards Visit Salvavidas de Acapulco

....from page 4

Acapulco Lifeguards for the Beach Services Administration. Senor Camacho was born in the State Capital, Chilpanzingo, but his family moved to Acapulco when he was only one month old. He attended grade school and high school in Acapulco, and began to compete as a swimmer in butterfly events when he was 16, in 1958.

The Director of Acapulco Lifeguards at that time was a world-record holding swimmer, Clemente Mejia Avila (no relation to Gus). He noticed the boy Pedro, and invited him to join the lifeguard ranks. Sr. Camacho has worked on the beaches of Acapulco for over 40 years, and is Coordinator for the City's Lifeguards. He was largely responsible for arranging and providing administrative support for the *CSLSA* training course and exchange program.

Sr. Camacho takes great personal satisfaction in having pulled over 350 people from the waves of the Bay, and in having known people like Johnny Weismuller, the most famous movie Tarzan, who lived and swam in Acapulco during the last years of his life. His most memorable day, he says, was in June of 1970 when a hurricane was forecast for Acapulco. The waves in the Bay were strong and high, and Sr. Camacho, working on Hornos Beach, pulled six people from the water that day, including two people whom he rescued simultaneously, one under each arm, despite a "remolino" (rip current) which carried him, and the two victims, to the next beach before he could get them out.

Our sincere thanks to the following organizations and individuals for their generous support: Bob Burnside, Matt Karl and Club Tortuga; Marine Rescue Products, Huntington City Beach Lifeguards, McMillan Rescue Products, The Froghouse, Volcom, Mexicana Airlines, and the United States Lifesaving Association.

The *CSLA* is looking forward to a long lasting friendship and a productive exchange program with the Acapulco Salvavidas. Efforts are already underway to raise funds and to organize volunteers to support next year's exchange. We anticipate inviting two of the Acapulco guards to visit California during the pre-summer lifeguard training period, and sending up

to four California guards to Acapulco in November of 2000. If you are interested in participating in this rewarding program, please contact Acapulco Exchange Program coordinator Gus Avila at (714) 374-0607. Tax deductible contributions to the Exchange Program fund can be sent to *CSLA Lifeguard Exchange*, PO Box 5091, Huntington Beach, CA 92615-5091.



Some of the 80 participants of the first Acapulco Salvavidas Training and Exchange Program take a photo break in front of the El Cano Hotel. State lifeguards Al Pepito, Al Fimlaid and program coordinator Gus Avila presented a 15-hour lifesaving course for the Acapulco city lifeguards and fire department, federal lifeguards, and naval forces.



Imperial Beach Junior Lifeguards hard at work

New Tradition at Del Mar Annual Recheck

By Eric Sandy, Del Mar



Del Mar Lifeguards perform their annual recheck with a new tradition that fosters camaraderie

We knew it would be different. The physical re-qualification for Del Mar's returning lifeguards was not going to be the same-old same old. We had some new guards, new equipment and a new chief lifeguard, Lt. Pat Vergne. In his first year, he had already impressed us with his imagination and willingness to try something new and challenging. Accepting input, suggestions and brain storming were among his strong points. What we did not know was that this year we would be breaking all the old paradigms.

We had already gotten a hint of things to come after watching the test for student guards held the week before. That's when Lt. Vergne broke away from the traditional run-swim-run format. Instead, the candidates were lined up, belly down in the sand, facing away from the ocean - almost like the beginning of beach flags. At the signal, they had to jump up and run about a hundred yards down the beach to where the swim fins and rescue tubes were stacked. During this run, the trainees also had to scan outside the surf line, then locate the mock victim wearing the colored cap assigned to them. After responding correctly and pulling in their victim, the candidates had to run back down the beach, grab a paddleboard, then go in and out through the surf line. Following this physical test, they each sat through a thirty-minute oral interview from a four-member board. Again, most of this was a departure from standard testing but gave us no clue to the nature of the next recheck.

Like many agencies, Del Mar stages a pre-summer physical test to insure the basic fitness level of the returning guards. The crew shows up in various states of conditioning. Some take the recheck very seriously, training and tapering as they would for a major competition. Others are already involved in either school, club or college teams and have a finely tuned racers edge. Then there are the self-motivated surf studs - and studettes. This type merely spends the off-season tearing up huge waves, often in far-off oceans. Surfing double overhead Blacks or Del Mar's beachbreak for a few months can get you in great shape.

Even though there is no award for winning the recheck, there definitely are bragging rights. Everyone seems to remember who won and, who ate it. Department lore recalls the gnarly days of cold water tests in booming surf with sand sucking shorepounds. One of the all-time classics featured Larry Helland, then in his forties, playing the wise old water-fox, waiting outside for a set wave. Larry then body surfed past the pack, beating the twenty-two year old college swim star to the beach. The veterans wanted to carry Larry out of the water. Larry humbly declined the honor but probably could have walked in...

And so on the cool Sunday morning, the recurring guards gathered in front of the HQ, getting loose and warm, laughing nervously, speculating about the course. Some were cautiously eyeing the competition, wondering who was fit, who was fat, who was fast. There were short, shallow discussions over the best attire. Birdwells were stylish and cool but baggy and slower. Speedos were fast but, well, this is the ocean! Soon they would all realize, it didn't matter.

From the HQ deck, the Lt. began to describe the test. Immediately we knew the huge difference - this year the key was TEAMWORK! The assignment at first drew smiles, especially from those who may not have been in peak condition.

The entire crew, as a team, would run several hundred yards down the beach. At the 20th Street Tower, they would find the Inflatable Rubber Boat (IRB). As a team, they would pick up the boat and carry it back to the HQ. From there to page 10.....

Landline?

By Eric Sandy, Del Mar

"Landline team captains please report to the starter". The competition director was passing the word over the loudspeaker. The scene; Huntington Beach, the event; California Lifeguard Championships. The response from our team? Shrugs, quizzical frowns, shaking heads, silly questions. "Did he say landmine, like dog droppings?" "Landline - is that like a 10-21, a phone call competition? - hey we've got some people who can talk all day!" "Landline, if that's a tug-of-war, we need big John". No, the loudspeaker clarified, the next event was admittedly unusual, maybe even peculiar but none of the above wise cracks were close.

Landline was described as being mostly an "East Coast thing", a rescue technique used by agencies that may not have those torpedo-speed swimmers like California. We still weren't very clear about Landline, but in the true spirit of go-for-it, Team Del Mar decided to give it a try.

Obviously, our first handicap was that most of our small crew of competitors had never even heard of Landline, let alone seen it done. Our second clue was when we noticed the other teams bringing their Landline stuff to the beach. What was that big wheel for? Why are those guys wearing gloves? Is that a shoulder pad? Are we all going to fist city? Is this crowd control practice? We'd heard HB crowds can throw a mean riot. Would we be roping up the beach derelicts?

We did quickly learn that we'd need a whole bunch of line but all we had was very heavy, half-inch nylon gear from the cliff rescue kit. Our team captain, Mark Rathsam, laughed and told us to improvise. The heavy line would have to do.

First, we had to tie two lengths together and then dig out a throw-bag from the river rescue gear. But finally, we had pieced together enough to reach the victim.

Getting the line out past the shore break and through the current of the HB trench was another matter. We watched the other teams walk out their line but quickly noticed that their thin, light stuff floated! Whoops. Dragging the rope along the bottom, our swimmer George Plesek, felt as if he were towing a truck. Hell, with that line, he could have! But George made it out to the victim, cold Cory McClusky, and the long strange journey back to shore began. Mark had drafted Enrique Montoya to play beach-mule and haul in all that water-soaked line with the human catch attached. Having already run, swum, paddled and rowed, Enrique was probably saving himself for beach flags - well, maybe saving himself for a cold beer. But he laughed and waded out to grab the line, waded and waded til he was neck deep. We couldn't tell if the line was keeping Enrique afloat or if he was actually pulling the rope in to shore. But somehow these guys gutted it out and carried the "victim" up the beach. We all screamed in stoked amazement as the judge gave us the stick for third place. Can you imagine what we could do with real gear and practice? We'll be back.

Among the many benefits of com-

petition are enhanced teamwork and practice with emergency equipment. But, emergencies never happen on schedule. All the most carefully scripted training scenarios presume proper equipment but that's seldom the case when the stuff hits the fan. Realistic training directors and the best leaders all insist that only by being ready to make-do will we succeed. Having the imagination, the ingenuity, the creativity and the courage to make the best use of whatever is available is the way to win in competition. On Thursday, July 15th at Huntington Beach, that's what Team Del Mar did. The same formula translates directly into real world emergencies.

The City of Del Mar seal has a Latin logo, "Multum in Parvo", or "much in little". Taking that suggestion to heart, the small team from Del Mar did their best. They are all very grateful to the HB crew for their hospitality, and for presenting a terrific venue. They are extremely impressed with the performance of all the great athletes. Team Del Mar also appreciated all the hard work from the volunteers who did such an outstanding job of organizing all those events.

And now, Team Del Mar even knows what Landline is!



Newport Beach Lifeguards now officially sponsored by Chevrolet

Club Tortuga Officials Sign Agreement to Implement Permanent Lifeguards in Oaxaca, Mexico

By Bob Burnside, LA County

On Nov. 11, 1999, Mexican government representatives from the State of Oaxaca, along with the U.S. Consulate and the USLA "Club Tortuga", signed a historical agreement creating Mexico's first government subsidized Permanent Lifeguard Corp. The Statewide Water Safety Master Plan, submitted to the Oaxacan Government in 1996, has now been adopted by the newly elected governor and will be implemented immediately!

The Club Tortuga President, Matt Karl of Huntington Beach Marine Safety Division, signed the formal "letter of intent" with the Director of Civil Protection of Oaxaca, Senior Hector Gonzales. The signing formalizes the enactment of the agreement.

"We finally got the gold ring!" said Bob Burnside, LA County Chief Lifeguard (ret.) and Club Tortuga Founding Father. "It's been a long time on the merry-go-round but it was well worth the ride."

Club Tortuga Liaisons Chief Jim Holland and Joaquin Venado will coordinate with the state government to quickly implement the agreement.

In other Mexican lifesaving developments, Acapulco lifeguard volunteers received a week of lifeguard training from California State Lifeguards Gus Avila, Al Pepito and Al Fimlaid all from Huntington State Beach. Some 80 Mexican lifeguards were trained by the American team of volunteers. Equipment, training and lifesaving manuals (Tortuga Spanish Lifeguard Manual) will greatly assist in the development of professional standards in Mexico. A true Mexi-

can National Lifeguard Association is forming now with a foothold in Mazatlan, Cancun, Acapulco, Puerto Escondido, and Ensenada as the key areas.

The Club Tortuga American Lifeguards are taking the message "Lifeguards for Life!" and "brothers together for safer beaches" across the borders to prevent drownings.

Should you wish to be part of this important journey, contact Matt Karl, Club Tortuga President at 714-536-5281, and congratulations to all who have kept the mission of water safety for all people moving forward.



Meeting with Oaxaca State Government to implement a Water Safety Program & full-time lifeguards are, from left to right, Joaquin Venada (US/Mexican Liaison), Manuel Maza (Chief of Oaxaca Fire Dept., Bob Burnside (Ret. Chief Lifeguard, L.A. County), Senora Murat (Wife of Governor of the State of Oaxaca), Mark Leyes (U.S. Consulate - Oaxaca), Matt Karl (President "Club Tortuga"), Hector Gonzalez (Director of Civil Protection).

Yo Ho Ho at Code Three

By Eric Sandy, Del Mar

December, 1999.

The sirens screamed. The children wondered what's up? In this neighborhood, the children heard the sirens often and it usually meant trouble. Had the arsonist torched another fire? Was it the ambulance coming to help a victim of the gang wars? Or was it the police on another chase? To the amazement of the children, it was none of these usual horror shows. The sirens were from the most unlikely

version of Santa's sleigh, a lifeguard truck! Towing a rescue boat filled with over a hundred presents for the children, the lifeguard truck had a full escort of police cars all with red lights flashing and sirens blaring. This was a good news parade!

It was all part of a unique holiday charity program featuring among others, the Del Mar Lifeguards. Chief Pat Vergne and Supervisor Mark Rathsam were Santa's helpers, unloading the gifts to underprivileged children.

Che Hill, a part-timer with Del Mar, had recently finished the Police Academy and thought that public safety services could make a great contribution to the low-income community. Distributing Christmas gifts will now be an annual project.

Involving the lifeguards was a dramatically different stroke. As the duties and responsibilities of lifeguards expand, it's good public relations and it's good for the soul to reach out to
to page 9...

Buddy Belshe Honored for 50 years of Service

By Eric Bauer, Newport

Buddy began his lifeguarding career in the summer of 1950 with the City of Newport Beach, where he worked for 27 years as a permanent employee, retiring as Captain on October 29, 1987. Buddy did not leave lifeguarding at that point either. Because of his passion for lifeguarding and love of helping people, he still lifeguards in the field as a seasonal lifeguard for Newport Beach.

Buddy's accomplishments also include participation with and service on the board of the USLA (formerly NLSA) as Vice President and Secretary during the early 60's. Buddy has also served on the board of the CSLSA and the NBOLA in various capacities. Buddy attended the first World Lifeguard Congress in South Africa, and was instrumental in organizing the 2nd World Congress in Newport Beach. He has toured Ireland, Wales, England, and Australia as a representative of professional lifeguards and the USLA.

Buddy is also an avid lifeguard competitor. He has no equal as a lifeguard competitor, competing on a regional and national level and winning many National Titles. Buddy also is untouched in many non-lifeguard competitions as well.

My words here cannot completely describe the feats and accomplishments of Buddy Belshe, but I am glad that the City is taking this moment to honor Buddy for his contributions to lifeguarding and to the City of Newport Beach. Buddy continues today as one of the best, if not THE best lifeguard our department has. If Buddy is on duty, you can rest assured that the water is being watched diligently and he is ready and capable of responding to save another life.



Buddy Belshe, shown here with his mother after finishing the Annual Huntington Beach Pier Swim in September 1999, was recently honored by the City of Newport Beach for his 50 years of public service



The kids, the parents, the presents, and the IRB

Yo Ho Ho

....from page 8

the less fortunate. We must let them know that we are also there to help. Children who unfortunately grow up fearing those with uniforms and badges, can learn that some people wearing red are good guys, and not just the local gangs sporting colors. When these same children are fortunate enough to get to the beach, they may remember that the lifeguard truck is a positive sign and that sirens and flashing red lights mean help is on the way.

Even though this Christmas response in San Diego had been a code run, there was no emergency in any negative sense. What had been rescued was a boatload of holiday spirit, what was saved was a hundred smiles.

The Women Who Save Lives: Female Lifeguards

By Bobbie Leonard, C 7/99
Courtesy Sun Newspapers

The cities of Del Mar and Solana Beach have something in common with the television series "Baywatch:" beautiful blonde female lifeguards who risk their lives every day to save others. That's where the similarities end. These women of the waves do not run down the beach in slow motion, nor are their bodies the result of some bizarre surgical augmentation. Del Mar's Jenn Ross has been a lifeguard for seven years and Solana Beach's "Turtle" Rudolph has been performing rescues for eight years. Both women have worked at other beaches in Southern California and both say these north county beach enclaves are by far their favorites. They are both dedicated, hard working lifeguards who

take their jobs seriously and say they prefer life at the beach to working inside from nine to five. Turtle said, "We get to do some pretty "gnarly" things everyday!" While Jenn added, "How many people sit at their job and love what they do?"

Both Del Mar and Solana Beach train their lifeguards in water and cliff rescues. Del Mar's are E.M.T. trained while Solana Beach gives extensive first aid training (40 hours) to all its lifeguards. The women are qualified to operate a wide variety of equipment necessary to perform rescues. Del Mar has two Quad Runners for quick access anywhere on the 2 1/2 miles of sand they patrol. Both agencies have
to page 12....

Recheck!

....from page 6

they would push the boat out through the surf and then pull the boat, as a team, back to 20th St. After dragging the IRB in through the surf they would haul it back up the beach to the boat shed. Then the team would run back to HQ.

Oh yea, one more thing. They would have guests. Both Mark Rathsam, the 200 lb. plus Lifeguard Supervisor and Brett Mattei, the former Lt. would be passengers in the IRB for the entire journey. Mark and Brett would provide appropriate jeering and encouraging and make sure everyone pulled and carried their weight. Any team member who lost contact with the IRB would be disqualified.

Running down to 20th St. was the easy part. The crew jogged and smiled. When they got to the IRB and lifted it up onto their shoulders, they stopped smiling. But already, the plan to emphasize teamwork was succeeding. Even with fifteen people, the load was heavy but by spacing themselves

between the IRB pontoons, the crew easily lifted the craft and it's occupants. Part of the way back to HQ, teamwork emerged again as individuals moved positions to more evenly carry the load. Meanwhile, Mark and Brett hung on, smiled and wondered if this is what Cleopatra felt like. The whole scene looked like some perversion of a Navy SEALs unit carrying their IRB on maneuvers.

Moving the IRB out through the surf was tricky. The crew had to be careful not to dump their esteemed cargo and also keep from leaving any team member crushed under the IRB. Thankfully, at least one of the guards, Andy Buser had listened carefully to the rules. Nobody had said anything about not taking a rescue tube. Several of the guards used the tubes as tethers and began to tow the IRB through the water as if they had just begun to rescue a five hundred-pound rubber whale. Others pushed from the sides or hung onto the back and kicked furiously like human outboard motors.

By the end of the sea journey, the crew was in sync, performing brilliantly. The teamwork was outstanding. They were all smiling again but not because the job was easy. Moving that IRB had been a demanding physical challenge. But now they were basking in the warmth of camaraderie. They all knew that by working together they could accomplish much more than competing against each other. They had a special synergy.

This crew ran back down the beach to HQ feeling good about themselves and about their ability to work as a team. These are lessons that will carry them to a successful summer providing a safe, well-regulated beach for all to enjoy. These same lessons will also serve them well in anything they choose to do in life.

PS. Being a USLA certified agency, Del Mar also requires that each guard complete the minimum running and swimming requirements. This is mandated through daily workouts and weekly qualifications.

Camp Pendleton Lifeguards Educate Beach Patrons with TREF Billboards Safety Info

By Robert Craig, Camp Pendleton

Recently the Camp Pendleton Lifeguard Service, in conjunction with Trauma Research Education Foundation, or T.R.E.F. have converted the "B.O.S.S." pamphlet (Beach Ocean Surf Safety), into a three foot by five foot safety billboard for public education. The T.R.E.F. boards are a great tool for educating the public in water safety and spinal injuries; due to the cartoon format, easy to read bold print, and bright colors that seem to attract people to them. Specifically, the board addresses not diving head first, checking with a lifeguard before entering the water, not swimming outside your limits, and many other key points.

Lifeguards from coast to coast have been plagued with safety concerns on the beach and in the open water. The Camp Pendleton Lifeguard Service and T.R.E.F. have designed a way to combat safety concerns in the water and the beach environment by coming up with a relaxed and easy format to discuss beach and ocean safety.

"We at the Camp Pendleton Lifeguard Service are very pleased with our T.R.E.F. billboards and have them easily displayed and visible on the back of all our portable and main lifeguard towers in both of our sections," said Vince Lombardi Lifeguard Captain. For more information about T.R.E.F., you can contact Mike Cassinelli at (858)404-1355.



CSLSA Competition Update

By Rob McGowan, L.A. County

2000 Regionals: July 19 (Wednesday) at Imperial Beach

2000 JG Regionals: July 20 (Thursday) at Imperial Beach

2000 Nationals: August 10, 11 and 12 at Crystal Pier,
Pacific Beach, San Diego

The USLA Competition Rulebook is being overhauled and updated. Hopefully, some of the "gray areas" can be clarified and cleaned up.

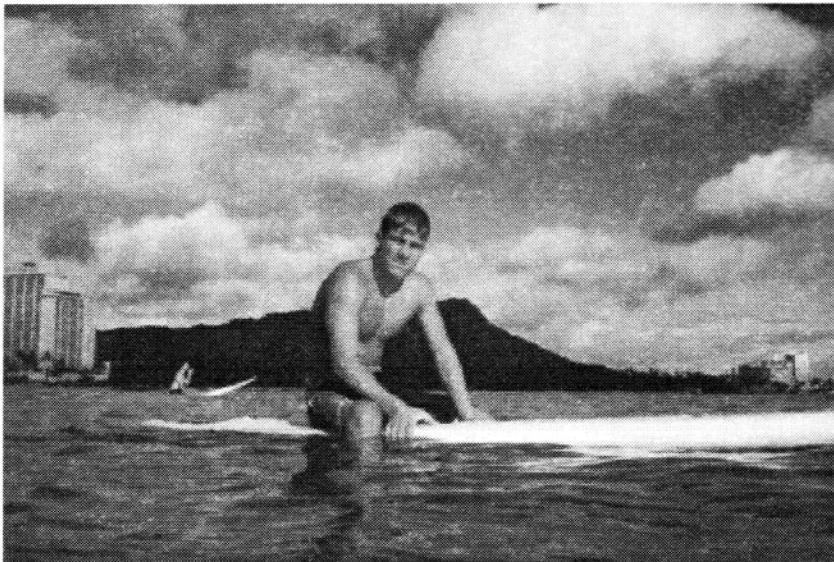
New for 2000 Nationals: Preliminary heats for Landline, Beach Flags, and Surfboats will be held on Thursday (August 10). Landline, Rescue Race, and Rescue Board Rescue Race will be limited to 4 teams per Chapter. The idea behind these changes is to help keep the competition running on time. One additional change is to allow the Head Officials to implement a time limit in which to complete any given event.

The "water judge" will from now on be a member of the "Corp of Officials." Speaking of officials, we are always looking for new officials. If you are interested in helping out as an official at Regionals, Nationals, or both, please contact Rob McGowan.

Rule changes that were adopted by the USLA that go into effect in 2000 include the addition of Women's age groups so that the Women's age categories are the same as the Men's. In addition, the "Host Event" has been eliminated.

Just a reminder that competition caps (beanies) are required at all USLA events. The rules are going to state that you must start and **finish** with the cap on your head. The complete minutes from the most recent USLA Competition Committee meeting can be found on the USLA website at www.usla.org in the "Guard Bulletin Board." You can also download the competition rules from the website, but be aware that they will not be updated until Spring.

The USLA National Team for Rescue 2000 has been selected. CSLSA members include Diane Graner-Gallas, Heidi Kissel, Ericka Keithly, Craig Hummer and Mitch Kahn. Also on the team are Matt Nunnally, Andreas Rostenberg, Maggie Hogan, and Maura Bolger of Monmouth County, NJ. Rounding out the team are Heather Hansen, Sean Gibson and Victor Fox from Florida. The Team Manager is Tim Gallagher and Mitch Kahn will be serving as player-coach. They will be travelling to Manly Beach, Sydney, Australia in March of 2000. The competition dates are March 23 through April 2. There is an inter club and masters competition as well and several CSLSA chapters are sending competitors. It should be the lifesaving event of the decade!



Erik Lind, 18-year old Huntington State Beach Lifeguard shown here while surfing at Waikiki in December, 1998, was killed in October of 1999 while piloting a small plane near Los Angeles. Erik and a friend were returning from a visit with his grandmother in Ventura and lost control of the plane after experiencing extremely low visibility. Orange County lifeguards gathered for a funeral procession with over 200 people in attendance.

President's Message

...from page 2

both to this organization and your individual chapters. It is my personal goal to visit every agency and chapter affiliate in the Southwest Region during my term in office, to help fan the flames of passion for our profession. We are all "Lifeguards for Life."

It is with greatest respect that I salute outgoing President Bill Richardson and every CSLSA member who has given selflessly to lifesaving and this organization. It is my privilege to serve as your president as we begin the new century. I thank you for your trust and confidence and look forward to working with you as we face the challenges ahead.

Yours in lifesaving,
Steve Long
CSLSA President

Women Lifeguards

....from p. 10

trucks and rescue boats in operation and the lifeguards are scuba certified. Jenn and Turtle do admit that the most popular TV show in syndication has helped their jobs in some ways. Like bringing recognition to the women who perform the same cliff rescues, rough water rescues, scuba dive and provide the same high quality of medical aid as male lifeguards. The downside that "Baywatch" has brought with it is the physical stereotypic portrayal of the female lifeguard. But both Jenn and Turtle are thankful the men they work with never make the mistake of comparing them to those TV illusions. They both describe what they do as one of the most serious jobs on earth. Turtle said, "You have so many factors here. It's a combination of the waves, rip current, the tide, the bottom, and the people themselves." Jenn pointed out that, "You learn something new everyday." Her initiation into the world of lifesaving remains vivid today. On her first day of duty at Del Mar she assisted in a triple rescue. Jenn said, "That was intense." Turtle added, "You have to learn as you go. Saving lives becomes second nature."

When asked, "Why a job at the ocean?" Turtle explained, "I grew up spending time at the beach." Jenn, on the other hand, was not terribly keen on the ocean after seeing "Jaws." Before that at the early age of three her first experience with lifesaving was as the victim. She decided to do her impersonation of Greg Louganis off the

high dive at the neighborhood pool in Houston. Thankfully a good Samaritan jumped in just as the toddler hit the water and pulled her to safety. But Jenn made a quick recovery, by age four she was a swim team member, which was quite an accomplishment considering she never had any swimming lessons. Turtle recalled her first experience as a "lifesaver" that took place in Monterey County at the mouth of the Carmel River. She was a seventh grader attending a friend's birthday party at the beach just south of the city of Carmel. One of Turtle's friends was wading in the knee-deep water when she got caught by the strong river current, which dragged her toward the ocean. Turtle ran downstream along the riverbank and jumped in, grabbed her friend and pulled her to safety.

Since those early years both women have become accomplished aquatic athletes. Jenn Ross participated in the Olympic Trials for flat water kayak in 1996, and just last summer she competed the grueling triathlon at Camp Pendleton, finishing third in her division. Turtle meanwhile was in the waters off Palos Verdes in an open ocean paddle board race competition. As Jenn Ross put it, "that girl 'rocks' on a paddle board! She is so fast!"

The mutual respect between these two professionals shows the level of commitment they have to their jobs. They save the lives of total strangers each and every day.

The Rise of Imperial Beach - Imperial Beach Lifeguards

By Jennifer Sheldon, Imperial Beach

If your only image or memory of Imperial Beach is a rough town filled with gangs, drugs, and violence, you really need to cruise south and visit the new I.B. With the financial support of the Port of San Diego, I.B. has turned a new leaf. Riffraff is gone, parks and street ends are remodeled, a new and improved Pier Plaza is built, and a State of the Art Safety Center named after surf legend and lifeguard hero Allen "Demsey" Holder is opening in November of 1999.

The core of Imperial Beach is its beach, and because of this, these improvements have had a massive impact on the Lifeguard Service. The Lifeguard Service has spent a long time playing catch up. From struggles to get year round staff to financially being able to afford modern rescue equipment. I. B. lifeguards made due at a level well below that in which has become standard up and down the coast. For the lifeguard service and the town itself things are definitely looking up.

Imperial Beach's coast spans 2 miles, running from the most southern point of Coronado to the most northern point of Tijuana Estuary National Refuge. The southern boundary lays one mile north of the Tijuana River mouth while the north boundary lies at the popular YMCA Camp Surf. The beach itself is decorated with two rock jetties on the north end, a 500 yard Pier centrally located, beach front homes and various shops. In reference to lifeguarding the beach is home to four portable towers, one Pier tower, and the old style lifeguard main tower at the end of Palm Ave. Come November 1999 the Main Tower will be torn down and replaced by a portable tower and the service will move into the new Safety Center at the foot of the Pier.

The lifeguard service is staffed with 24 seasonal lifeguards and 2 permanents. There is 1 captain, 1 sergeant, 6 seasonal lifeguard II's and, 18 seasonal lifeguard I's. Imperial Beach seasonal lifeguards work a maximum of 1000 hours per fiscal year. These hours are spread throughout the year per employee, enabling seasonal staff to be scheduled year round.

The lifeguards stay very busy performing approximately 500 aquatic rescues and 300 medical aids a year. The beach has on average 2-million visitors a year. The aquatic rescues are usually due to I..B.'s big surf and strong rip currents. To those that are familiar with I. B., it is known for picking up almost any swell, maintaining great shape, and being very consistent. With these conditions combined with glassy days and endless sunshine, I. B. has great summer crowds. In addition to aquatic and beach safety lifeguards are responsible for enforcing City Beach and Pier Municipal Codes, with the San Diego Sheriffs' sub station located in the Safety Center enforcement issues are resolved rapidly.

History

Imperial Beach Lifeguarding dates back to the early 1920's. The earliest I.B. lifeguards were true watermen; they came down to the beach to surf, hang out, and save lives. During this time these were the most qualified individuals, with the most water knowledge. In these early years of I.B. lifeguarding there was no established service, no records were kept, just passed down stories of all the lifesaving heroic acts. In 1938 I.B. would be graced with the arrival of Allan Holder. Holder amazed on lookers with his wave knowledge and ability to surf I. B.'s biggest waves at the Tijuana Sloughs. In 1940 Holder became Imperial Beaches first official lifeguard working for the county of San Diego. Holder over the following years, with a very limited budget, established a lifeguard service that would impress any modern day lifeguard. With only an eight person staff Holder and his crew would perform 300 to 400 rescues a summer. Holder was so dedicated to the lifestyle, he lived with several other lifeguards in a beach front home known as the "White House". This was to page 15....



Imperial Beach Captain Robert Soabenow and seasonal LG-1 Oscar Alvarez in front of their new Safety Center

Junior Lifeguard Training Works!

By Eric Sandy, Del Mar

Junior Lifeguards is both a basic training for future lifeguards and an essential slice of education for anyone who enjoys the ocean environment. Many of us have witnessed the extraordinary success of our Junior Lifeguard programs, often seeing a very quick return on the investment. The following is one of many accounts of JG's doing very well, very soon after their training.

Even though she was shouting in Japanese, the mother's crying gestures had a haunting, familiar tone. She was pointing to the ocean, signaling that her son had gone into the water near the coral reef but had not returned. What was not familiar was our surroundings. This was not Del Mar. This was not a sandbar rip current at 23rd Street or even a problem near the rocky reefs of 15th Street.

We were in Maui on vacation. We had purposely sought out a remote coral reef on the south coast that had a reputation for great diving. The hike in along desolate beaches was beautiful and secluded. No one needed to mention that there was no lifeguard on duty!

The grieving mother obviously could not swim. She would rush towards the ocean and then stop, knee deep, waving and calling for her son. Other family members joined the mother. They were running towards the water, frantic and desperate. It was quickly apparent that none of them could swim either and now they feared the worse. Seeing us, they were pleading for help in broken English.

Without hesitation, Pat O' Harra and Ben Farrell, our Junior Lifeguards, sprang into action. They scanned the water looking for a possible victim, a rip current or any sign of a diver in distress. They listened to the Mother's description of the lost boy and through hand signals, got a better idea as to where the boy was last seen. As I was getting ready to enter the

water, they quickly ran back to our campsite for my swim-fins and dive mask. Knowing that the wind chop and swirling currents around the reef presented a hazardous rescue scene, the two JGs searched for flotation devices. Ben laughed when he found a small inflatable mat but we realized that might be all we could find. Pat came back with a body board he had commandeered. If necessary, either device would be of great help in assisting a tired swimmer. In the worst case, it may have been necessary to use the flotation devices to bring in a body.

Pat and Ben then remembered another valuable lesson from this summer's Junior Lifeguard training in Del Mar. As I began to enter the water, they began to run up and down the beach looking for other possible locations for the missing boy. How many times has this been the key at your beach? Instead of overreacting and wasting valuable personnel on a premature body search, you quickly check other possibilities. And how often has that "missing person" turned up back at the family car, at the nearby hotel room or with a friendly group of children down the beach?

Most thankfully, this incident ended just that way. Pat and Ben were waving to a boy down the beach who fit the description of the missing youth. Like so many other cases, this boy had drifted away from his entry point. Being unfamiliar with the beach, the boy had wandered off looking for his family.

Their reunion was joyous and tearful. Unlike some situations we have seen at home, this family was most grateful for our help. Even though we had done little but prepared for a rescue and helped look for the child, they responded as if we had saved a life. Lacking a common language, we were left with a long commotion of bows, hugs and more bows. Most of the credit here belongs to our young companions, Pat and Ben. They reacted maturely, logically, and calmly. They were helpful and innovative. They were ready to respond wherever they were needed. They remembered their training. Junior Lifeguards works!

With thanks and congratulations to Del Mar Junior Lifeguard Instructors, Jenn Ross and Pooya Rezaei.

The CLSA Junior Guard Committee Chair Reenie Boyer presented the 1999 junior Lifeguards of the Year awards to, from left to right, Harrison Brown "C" - Newport, Alli Manning "B" - Newport, and Carolyn Orr "A" - Seal Beach.



Imperial Beach ...from page 13

a house where lifeguards could live if they needed a place, and it was also ideal for responding quickly to any emergency.

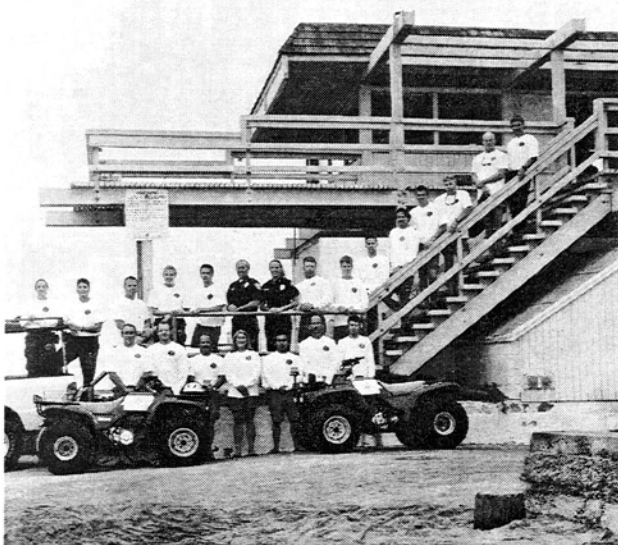
Since Holder's time Imperial Beach has experienced some great milestones. In 1994 the Port of San Diego acquired the "trust" for the tide lands and funds services through a contract with the City Imperial Beach. The Imperial Beach Lifeguard Association was established in 1992. In 1999 all employed EMT lifeguards were trained and certified in both defibrillator operation and Combi-tube, making I.B. the first lifeguard service in San Diego County to have this certification.

Employment Opportunity

Imperial Beach hires seasonal lifeguard I's who have successfully completed the 80 hour Miramar College San Diego Regional Lifeguard Academy and American Red Cross's Emergency Response course. Lifeguards are hired on a per need basis. Lifeguard II's are promoted from within the department after being selected by an interview panel. Candidates are required to be an EMT and have worked a minimum of 2000 hours. Permanent positions are an open hiring process and there are hopes for additional permanent positions to arise in the future. Requirements for permanent positions are extensive and vary due to position. Contact City Personnel for further questions on job requirements and announcements at (619) 338-4331.

Water Quality

Not only has Imperial Beach improved in looks and atmosphere, but the water has cleaned up as well. Due to the federal sewage plant located on the Tijuana River being on line since November of 1998, I. B.'s water problems have practically dissipated to nothing. To spread an understanding, in 1998 the water was contaminated 191 days and in



Imperial Beach Summer Beach Crowd

1999 as of November the count is 17 days. All of these days fell prior to May and were due to rain run off. Because of the previous water problems, I.B.'s water is monitored and tested religiously. Beach goers, rest assure that your health is definitely being guarded at Imperial Beach.

Junior Lifeguards

The Junior Lifeguard Program was established in 1996 by Seasonal Lifeguard II Robert Patton. It was an immediate success, drawing kids from the whole South bay area. In 1998 the program took a hard hit due to water quality, but has since recovered and is once again thriving. The program runs two 4 week summer sessions, with approximately 60 kids in each and building. I.B. is considering an experimental fall weekend JG program in the year 2000.

Equipment

Imperial Beach, in recent years has had the fortune to step up in equipment. The beach is patrolled by three lifeguard trucks, and two all-terrain vehicles. The service also owns one personnel water craft, and one 17 foot ridged hull inflatable boat. Every lifeguard is certified as personnel water craft operator by their third year of service.

Imperial Beach has definitely come a long way in a short time. The thing that has remained the same in this ever changing town; is still and will always be "Classic Southern California." Where the surf is good, the sun is hot, the people are friendly, and the lives are guarded and saved by some of the finest lifeguards.

1999 Imperial Beach Staff, with Captain Robert Stabenow and Sergeant Jennifer Shelden in the center.

CSLSA Heroic Acts

.....from page 4

water in surf up to 15 feet and gale force winds. Agencies are requested to forward any oversights on the awards lists to Committee Chair at e-mail orange@fea.net.

National Lifesaving Award: The National Lifesaving Award gives due recognition to a lifeguard who voluntarily intervened in an emergency situation and performed a lifesaving act. The award will be presented as a framed letter citing the heroic act. This award was created to fill an apparent void, recognizing exceptional action, which took place without the extraordinary life-threatening element required for the Medal of Valor.

Heroic Act Committee will consider requests for Heroic Act Awards for swimmer/surfer rescues at Pismo Beach, Ca. and San Onofre State Beach, Ca. The two incidents involved surfers who recovered unconscious and partially submerged victims, bringing them to shore and assisting successful resuscitation efforts.

U.S. /California - New Zealand Lifeguard Exchange Candidate

By Eric Bauer, Newport Beach

Charlie Dall, a Newport Beach Lifeguard, has been selected to represent California in the annual Auckland, New Zealand Lifeguard exchange. Charlie is a 20-year old from Huntington Beach, California where he lives with his Mother, Christine. He is a graduate of Huntington Beach High School in 1998 where he was a student athlete, graduated with honors, and was named in Who's Who of America's High School Students.

Charlie lettered in Swimming and Water-Polo at Huntington Beach High School where he was the recipient of the Principal's award for highest GPA on the team. He was also an All-American Swimmer in 1997. Last year Charlie attended Santa Ana College and completed the course work in the Fire Technology Program and will re-

turn from New Zealand to be a member of the 115th Fire Academy. At Santa Ana Charlie also continued his athletic endeavors and was the high point scorer on the swim team in 1999.

Upon completion of his Firefighter I certificate, he plans to attend California State University, Los Angeles to complete a BA in Fire Administration and subsequently pursue a career in the Fire Service.

Charlie will be joined by another California lifeguard from California, Shannon Svenson, Department of Parks and Recreation, San Diego District, Silver Strand.

The exchange representatives are responsible for paying their own way and will be seeking sponsors for fundraising.

Unsolicited comments were made by the selection committee that Charlie was a superior candidate. Newport Beach Fire and Marine Department, NBOLA, CSLSA, and the USLA are fortunate to have such an outstanding representative.

CSLSA President Bill Richardson stands with CSLSA New Zealand Exchange Delegates Shannon Svenson (San Diego), Charlie Dall (Newport Beach), and Exchange Committee Chair Chris Graham



PWC/Lifesled Emerges as Preferred Tool for Ocean & Rough Water Rescues

By Gary Fisher, Lifesled

Public Safety Agencies around the world embracing new system for saving lives

OCEANSIDE, Calif. - Lifeguards and public safety agencies around the world are embracing an innovative rescue system that already has saved hundreds of lives, and promises to save thousands more in extreme rough water situations such as ocean storms, heavy surf, rip currents, flooding rivers and other life threatening situations.

Born in the huge waves and treacherous currents of Hawaii, the system merges the speed and agility of personal watercraft (PWC) with an extraction device, or rescue sled, that is pulled behind the PWC, enabling rescuers to quickly extract victims from rough water and deliver them safely to shore or out of danger. Hawaiian lifeguards Brian Keaulana and Terry Ahue are credited with originating the system, initially conceived to improve rescue efforts on the North Shore of Oahu in Hawaii, where surfers and beachgoers regularly encounter some of the world's most powerful waves and currents.

After years of research and development, the PWC/sled system is becoming standard issue for rough water rescues the world over, in some cases surpassing widely used Inflatable Rescue Boats (IRB) in terms of efficiency and effectiveness. The system was first conceived in 1989, when Keaulana and Ahue were operating a private water patrol company in Oahu, using surfboards and paddleboards for rescues. The two became interested in PWCs as rescue devices after seeing new sit-down model produced by Yamaha - the typical stand-up models popular at that time were considered unsatisfactory for rescues. However, even the sit-down version would not work on its own without a flotation device to carry victims to safety. "Without the sled, it is impossible to pick up somebody instantly," explains Ahue. "You've got to stop, grab the victim, then the victim has to climb up onto the PWC. If the victim is unconscious or exhausted, the PWC on its own doesn't work." Keaulana and Ahue hit upon the idea of a sled that could be secured to the PWC. With the help of fellow lifeguard Melvin Pu'u, they began modifying bodyboards and experimenting with different attachment methods. The biggest challenge was building a sled that could withstand the stress of being pulled behind a fast-moving PWC in rough water conditions, compounded by the weight of one or more victims. Handles were another vital feature of the sled, allowing rescuers and victims to hang on while being pulled to safety.

In 1990, Keaulana and Ahue came across a unique bodyboard being used during surfing contests at Makaha organized by Brian Keaulana's father, Buffalo, considered Hawaii's most respected waterman. Manufactured by Gary Fisher of Oceanside, Ca.-based Wahoo International, also a sponsor of the contests, the boards were larger and stronger than the mass-produced bodyboards the lifeguards used in earlier experiments. "Gary was making boards for the big guys in Buffalo's contest, and we knew he could make sleds for us because it was the same concept and the materials were superior," Ahue says. "They were very durable but the wrong shape for our use, so we asked him to streamline them and install handles. He did some R&D, and we went through a trial and error process until the design was perfected. Over the years we've been using the Wahoo LifeSleds' because they are stronger and can withstand weather better than the other ones. From there, the whole concept just took off."

The new rescue system was not initially welcomed with open arms by the Honolulu City Council. As a recreational toy, personal watercraft were drawing increased criticism as noisy, polluting machines that detracted from the aesthetic beauty of the ocean. City officials were more interested in the inflatable rescue boats, the primary rescue vehicle used in Australia and other countries. It was in this atmosphere that Keaulana and Ahue organized a demonstration of the system for City Council members at Ehukai Beach, adjacent to the famous Pipeline surf break, during a large swell. The demonstration involved predetermined "victims," and lifeguards with swim fins and surfboards, IRBs, and the PWC/sled device as rescuers. "The lifeguards with surfboards took up to a half hour to rescue the victims," recalls Ahue. "Then we sent the IRBs out. They were better. Then we launched the PWCs and sleds, and we were able to bring the victims in within three minutes. They became convinced that the sled was the way to go, and began allocating money to help develop it." The lifeguards performed a similar demonstration during an international lifesaving convention in New Zealand, a die-hard supporter of IRBs. Ahue reports that even old-school Australian lifeguards were impressed with the PWC/sled system.

The word spread, and Keaulana and Ahue were invited to page 18.....

PWC/Lifesled

...from p. 17

as far away as China and Taiwan to demonstrate their system's effectiveness compared to inflatable boats. Rescue agencies learned that PWCs require less time and effort than IRBs during beach launches. Once a victim is located, especially in relentless surf conditions, the PWC can maneuver quicker and easier between swells. With the LifeSled at water level, little or no lifting is required, in contrast to the inflatables.

To test the system in non-ocean conditions, Ahue launched into the swift waters of Waimea River. "I'd see all these storms in California and the mainland, these big overflowing rivers where lifeguards would try to grab people stranded on cars and in trees. I would like to try it in those conditions. I rode it up and down the Waimea River when it was running strong, and it does work. I'm confident it will work in flood situations."

"From high surf to open water conditions, to lakes and rivers, the use of the PWC as a rescue boat has increased and been enhanced with the use of rescue boards," says Shawn Alladio, a veteran life saving expert who serves a variety of organizations including the California Department of Waterways, the Professional International Jet Sports Boating Association, and the International Surfing Association. "In some situations it's a matter of life and death. Timing the rescue down to a matter of seconds can be the difference, not only for the victim, but the rescuer as well. The rescue board adds a new element to offset previous limitations in rescue procedures, such as capsizing rescue vessels and the distress of victims that physical injury or fatigue created." Bob Davis of Connecticut-based MARSARS Water Rescue Systems Inc. believes rescue sleds such as the Wahoo LifeSled are superior to other extraction devices such as wire baskets in certain situations. Davis, who served in the Navy in Vietnam, says the method of fastening extraction devices to PWCs is also crucial in life-saving situations. "The basket was a popular extraction device because it could be adapted to just about any type of personal watercraft through a single hookup point in the rear," says Davis. "But in my opinion that's a dangerous situation, because if your craft loses power, the basket is going to sink. With a sled rescue, if your craft fails for whatever reason, the victim is still out of the water. That is one of the key benefits of the sled versus the basket rescue. Another problem with baskets is that they have a propensity to windmill, or flip over underway. With the Wahoo three-point hookup, that prevents the windmill effect from happening."

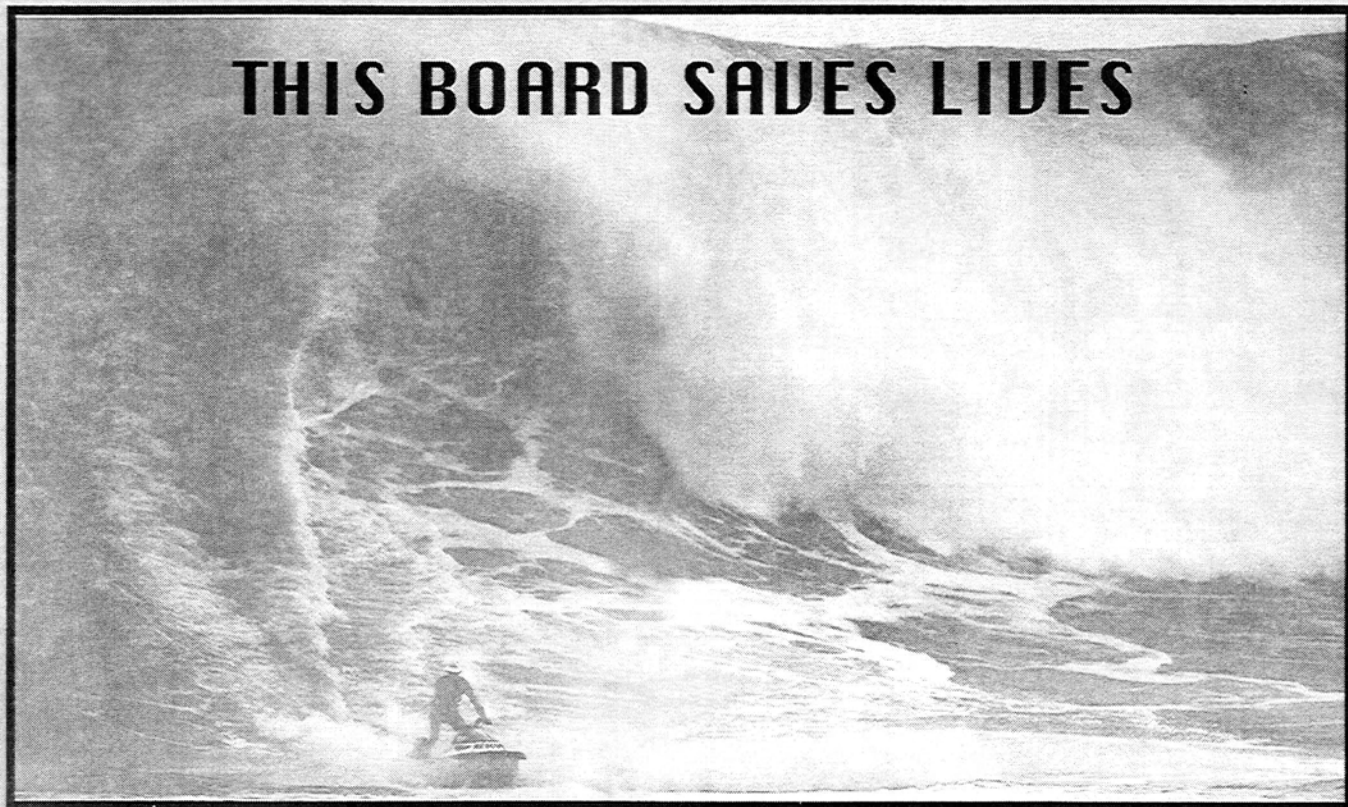
In addition to saving lives, the rescue system is now playing a vital role in the emergence of tow surfing, and was featured in the recently released IMAX film, "Extreme." Ken Bradshaw, co-director of the World Tow Surfing Association who is credited with mastering the biggest wave ever ridden by a surfer, is another strong advocate of the LifeSled. "The LifeSled turns a toy into a tool," says Bradshaw. "Otherwise the PWC is strictly a recreational vehicle. My opinion is that a PWC should never be taken out without a sled attached to it." Bradshaw and his girlfriend, women's professional surfing champion Layne Beachley of Australia, are among a growing number of surfers using PWCs and the LifeSled to launch into huge waves that otherwise could not be caught with human paddling strength alone. The system is also used to retrieve surfers after rides, and carry them to safety after wipeouts. Wahoo LifeSleds are the sled of choice for surfers and rescuers in such big wave venues as Todos Santos in Mexico, Mavericks in Central California, and for an upcoming competition held 100 miles off the California coast at Cortez Bank. At the 1999 Pipeline Masters in Hawaii, the LifeSled was used to rescue former world champion Derek Ho after he was knocked nearly unconscious by a bad wipeout.

"In tow surfing you may need to search for surfers being held underwater in an area larger than a football field," explains Bradshaw. "Once you see a head pop up, you have only a few seconds to respond before another wave comes. There's no way you could retrieve that surfer without the sled. You would have to wait for the waves to end, which could be too late." This year, the Association of Surfing Professionals will experiment at select locations with the PWC/sled system to ferry surfers back outside after completing rides, eliminating the time spent paddling back out. Eliminating this "down time" will make surfing contests more exciting, as well as improve the safety factor, Bradshaw and ASP officials contend.

Originally created for recreation, both personal watercraft and hard composite boards such as the Wahoo LifeSled have quickly evolved into vital lifesaving tools for lifeguards, fire and police departments, the Coast Guard, and other agencies committed to safety in ocean and swift water situations.

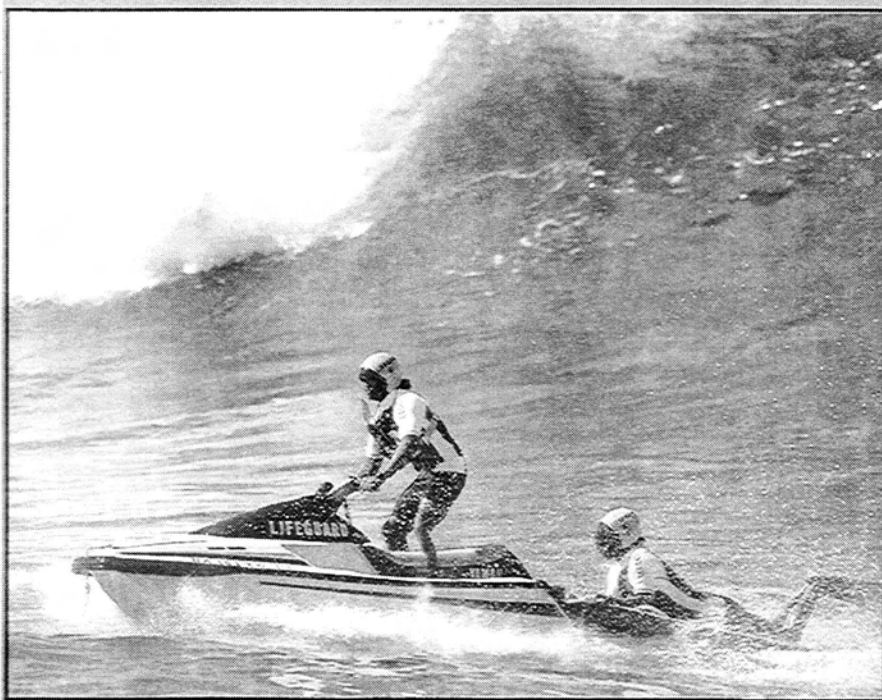
For more information on the Wahoo LifeSled and its application in rescue situations and tow surfing, contact Gary Fisher at Wahoo International, (760) 967-7873, or visit the web site: www.lifesled.com.

THIS BOARD SAVES LIVES

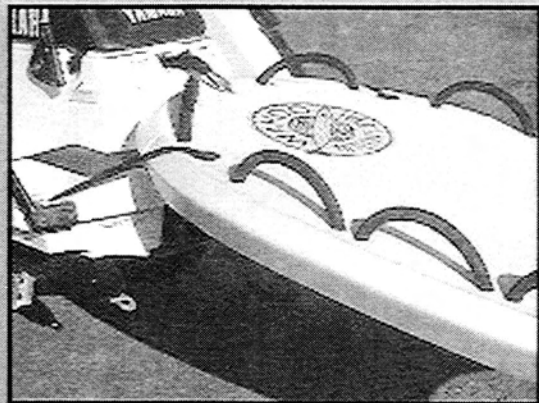


Westside O'ahu Lifeguard Brian Keaulana

+ **LIFESLED** +



North Shore O'ahu Lifeguards Terry Ahue & Melvin Pu'u



SPECIFICATIONS

- 62" X 36" X 4.5" (6.4 ft³ displacement) 33 lbs.
- Easily floats two adults.
- 3-point hook-up system allows tail pivot.
- Extremely durable composite construction.
- Non-invasive hook-up to most PWC's
- Bright, weatherable yellow / coast guard orange.
- Replaceable nose guard.
- Ten internally bonded handles (no hull protrusions).
- Tacky-when-wet deck & handles.
- Tested/proven in extreme North Shore conditions by Hawaii's finest watermen since 1990.

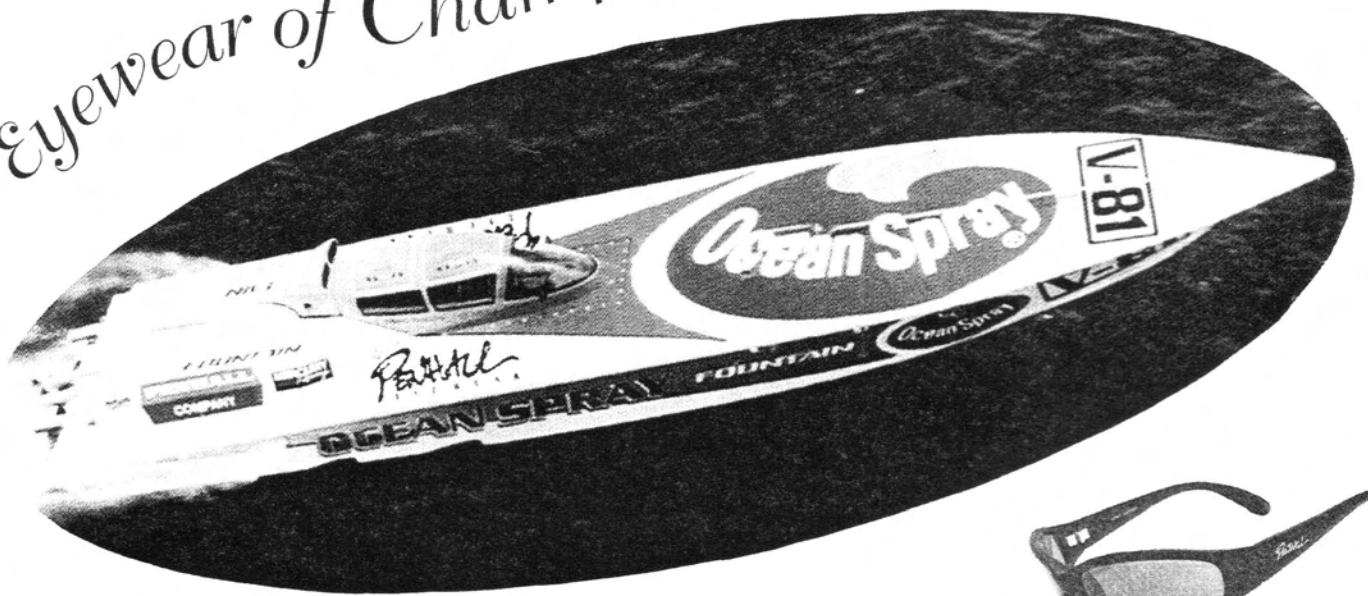


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Eyewear of Champions



*We Support Lifeguards
Thanks for keeping our
beaches safe!*



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