

# Cal-Surf News

Volume 4 Number 1

Spring 1997



*Huntington Beach Lifeguard's Dive Team was used to recover a Limousine that was deliberately pushed off the pier. A crane hoisted the car back on the pier.*



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## President's Report

By B. Chris Brewster, San Diego

What have you done for me lately? It's a shopworn catch phrase that sometimes seems to capture a concern of California lifeguards when they think of CSLSA and the USLA. Well, in the last year your volunteer officers and committee members have done a lot for you.

Members of the CSLSA Executive Board organized the Regional Championships for our competitors and worked with San Diego to mount the Junior Lifeguard Championships, with more than 1,000 participants. Next year, the nationals will be in our region, in San Diego, which should save plenty of money in

transportation costs. Members of the CSLSA Board also spent many hours seeking funding for the USLA team's journey to the international lifesaving championships in South Africa last year.

This year, CSLSA and its officers have supported efforts to improve lifesaving practices in Mexico, Argentina, and Italy. New public education materials were generated to help prevent drownings. A new Heroic Acts medal was created. Standards have been developed for non-lifeguard aquatic rescue providers to ensure that they meet reasonable minimums nationwide. Certification Officers have re-

viewed a number of lifeguard agencies applying for USLA certification.

Some of our work has involved making sure that members receive a kit each year with basic supplies like sunscreen, a T-shirt, a window decal and so forth. We have also worked to generate donations and sponsorships to fund important CSLSA activities and to make sure we are fully represented at USLA Board of Directors meetings. This newsletter alone is a significant task to help keep you informed and to exchange information among lifeguard agencies.

These are just a few examples of some of the projects, but there are also the day to day tasks. The Executive Board meets once a month or so. There are budgets that need to be balanced, correspondence to return, phone calls to answer, etc. All of this work is done by lifeguards volunteering their free time to provide opportunities to you and to help advance the lifesaving profession.

I ask all of you to look to yourselves and ask, what have you done for you lately? And what have you done to enhance the lifesaving profession?

Being involved is challenging and can be time consuming, but it is tremendously rewarding. There is a camaraderie among those of us who give our free time to advance the lifesaving profession that forms a lifetime bond. We're interested in your ideas, your contributions, your energies. We invite you to join our efforts and our team working for the betterment of lifesaving.



### Cal Surf News

is the official Newsletter of the

## California Surf Lifesaving Association

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The CSLSA is a non-profit 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.

# USLA Medals of Valor Presented to Mike Stephenson and Tim Murphy of California State Parks System

*Editor's Note: The following depiction of the events that followed were taken from the original letter supplied by Carl Drake in requesting recognition for Mike Stephenson and Tim Murphy.*

On the night of April 6, 1996 in the area of Goat Rock, Sonoma State Beach, Mr. Chris Chouteau of Heraldsburg, California went surfing with friends. Little did he know the adventure this surf trip would turn into.

The scene of the incident is approximately a quarter mile south of the mouth of the Russian River. The beach area is framed by steep cliffs and rock outcropping that extend offshore for up to a half mile. The coast is completely unprotected by offshore islands or points. Surfable areas are minimal since most of the shoreline consists of a powerful shore break. The area is populated by harbor seals and often visited by great white sharks. At the time of the rescue, the sun had set. There was a steady 8-10 foot shore break with occasional sets up to 12 feet. The water temperature was 50 F. The coast is undeveloped with no shore lights visible from shore and there was a fog settling in that brought visibility to under 100 feet.

There was a strong south to north side current that moved toward the prominent rock outcroppings which was being pounded by the surf.

At about 6:00 p.m., while surfing Mr. Chouteau tried several times to come in on waves, but was unsuccessful. He decided to paddle south and try to take the surf break in, but the current was too strong and it kept him out to sea. He sat on his board waving his arms and yelling for help. Exhausted and being taken out to sea by the currents, he found a large rock just north of the Goat Rock formation and pulled himself out of the water where he waited for help.

Stephenson and Murphy responded to a call of a surfer in distress and entered the water at about 7:00 p.m. They wore surfing style wetsuits (as opposed to thicker suits meant for cold water and diving), and swim fins. Conditions were too rough for a paddleboard or IRB.

The Coast Guard had been alerted and a patrol boat and helo were dispatched. Murphy and Stephenson entered the water a couple of hundred yards apart and kept in contact by yelling. They were finally able

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*“At this point all three were caught by the shore break and were thrown over the falls. This caused the strap on Stephenson's rescue tube to break and contact to be lost between Murphy and the victim.”*

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to establish voice contact with Chris. Stephenson was also able to catch a fading glimpse of the victim just as the area was completely enveloped in darkness. They saw that Chris was perched on a garage size rock that is located about ½ mile off shore. Stephenson attempted to use the power of the swells to mount the rock but was unable to obtain a secure hold. He had to discontinue his attempts as his hands had become too badly cut and there was a concern about getting knocked out since he did not have a helmet.

When Chris would not dismount from the rock and the two lifeguards were unable to reach him because of the swells, they stayed in the water and reassured him that a Coast Guard helo was on the way. At

8:50 p.m. the Coast Guard helo arrived and started a search pattern. The lifeguards and the victim had not been seen from shore since shortly after 7:00 p.m. After about ten minutes, the helo had to break off its search because of low visibility. The lifeguards heard the helo and realized that the visibility precluded any assistance. Finally, the guards talked the victim into reentering the water.

The victim was strapped into Murphy's rescue tube and Stephenson hooked his on so that the two guards could tow in tandem. After a 40 minute swim, they reached the shore. They had to continuously fight the current to avoid being pinned against the rock outcropping. They were eventually able to see a light powered by a generator on shore which guided them to the general direction of help. Upon their arrival into the shore break, the light went out.

At this point all three were caught by the shore break and were thrown over the falls. This caused the strap on Stephenson's rescue tube to break and contact to be lost between Murphy and the victim. Murphy also lost his fins, but was able to quickly grab Chouteau and get him safely on shore. Stephenson besides loosening his strap, had the clip to the rescue tube catch his right wetsuit sleeve and pin his arm behind him. In this position he was thrown over the falls again.

Both guards and Chouteau made it to shore at about 9:35 p.m. They had been out of contact with those on shore for about 2 ½ hours. Those on shore, including Stephenson's wife, were completely unaware of their condition and were comforted only by the knowledge and skill they knew the lifeguards possessed.

Paramedics examined all three and released them. The only injuries were scrapes, cuts, and as can be imagined, extreme cold. (Continued on p.7)



## Shop Talk..... Treatment for Stingray Victims

by John Picken, Huntington Beach

In the past year we have seen an increase in the injuries from stingrays, which have been plaguing the local beaches. As a reminder for all of the brave souls who respond to the sting victim, the following is submitted.

Depending on your local protocol, the injury from a stingray should be treated as follows: the stinger should be removed by scraping the skin with a plastic card or wooden tongue depressor, then immobilize and soak the affected area in hot water for 30 minutes. The water should be as hot as the patient can stand without actually burning. Toxins from these animals are heat sensitive, and dramatic relief from local pain often occurs following the application of the hot water. It should be noted that allergic reactions can occur from the injection of the toxins from these animals, therefore a continued monitoring of the patient should be maintained to determine if the patient shows any signs of anaphylactic shock. As with any puncture wound, infection can be a real hazard, so transport to a local medical facility should be recommended.

Remember the sting from a stingray can be extremely painful, so try to be thoughtful of the patient when treating. When applying the hot water, be sure not to scald the patient, as this will mask the normal reaction to the heat and also create a second injury that may leave you with a little egg on your face.

*Many beaches in Orange County have been inundated with stingrays, even bat rays have been found like this one in Huntington Beach.*

## Agency Profile: Camp Pendleton

by Vince Lombardi, Camp Pendleton

The Camp Pendleton Lifeguard Department was formed in 1952 by a group of Marines who recognized the need for a professional lifesaving service on the Marine Base. Prior to this, lifeguard duties for Del Mar Jetty and San Onofre Beach were voluntarily provided by the Navy Combat Demolition Team. Camp Pendleton Marine Base sits on what used to be the "Santa Margarita Ranch", which the federal government purchased from ranchers in 1943.

diver with prior experience lifeguarding in Hawaii. The lifeguard service staffed five Marines north at San Onofre Beach and six Marines South at Del Mar Beach, (just north of the Oceanside Harbor). The base provided the lifeguards with beach chairs, rescue cans and a trailer-type office to operate out of at each beach. Having no type of radio or phone, the guards positioned themselves where they could always be in view of one another. The base also

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“Although impractical for rescue purposes, lifeguards posed with the armored beast behind them for their first staff photo to keep the “higher-ups” happy.”

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In 1951, a “beach club” was constructed into the cliffs at San Onofre beach. The dramatic growth in beach population during the summer season presented the base General with the need to form a lifeguard service on the base to protect the beach patrons. The base picked servicemen who possessed backgrounds in water safety and with certifications like water safety instructor and first aid. The first “master lifeguard” was a Marine named Leslie Ray “Bud” Dalton, an avid scuba

equipped the guards with a Navy “duckboat” (like a huge rowboat with four wheels). Although impractical for rescue purposes, lifeguards posed with the armored beast behind them for their first staff photo to keep the “higher-ups” happy. Bud Dalton eventually retired from the Marine Corps and became the Aquatics Director for Base Special Services on Camp Pendleton. In the mid 1960’s, the Camp Pendleton Lifeguard Department fell un(Continued on p. 5)



## Camp Pendleton

(Continued from p. 4)

der Special Services direction and, for the first time, hired nonmilitary lifeguards. Throughout the next decade, the lifeguard department accomplished dramatic improvements by acquiring wooden towers and two lifeguard jeeps. In 1975, Bill Porter took on the position of Lifeguard Captain for both beaches. Working closely with Bud Dalton, they acquired funding to build a lifeguard headquarters with an observation tower and first aid room at each of the beaches. Increasing beach populations called for a staff of nearly twenty guards working from Memorial Day to Labor Day. The rest of the year the beach was left unstaffed.

The department continued to grow in a positive manner during the 1980's, beginning with Bud Dalton's appointment as Director of Base Special Services. As a result of this, his first priority was the lifeguards. New headquarters with even better facilities were built at both beaches. The department had a rescue unit at each beach as well as a backup unit. Captain Bill Porter acquired a rescue boat for use at Del Mar in the harbor area, since the base has its own marina. Staff numbers rose to twenty-five lifeguards for both beaches, with one lifeguard lieutenant and sergeant at each beach.

In 1987, with 18 years of experience behind him, Captain Bill Porter retired his service from the Department. His position was filled by Tom Richards, who is still Captain today. Bud Dalton retired from the Special Services position of Recreation Director in 1989 to pursue missionary work full time. On September 6, 1996, Bud Dalton passed away fighting an ongoing battle against Chronic Lymphatic Leukemia.

Since the late 1980's, the department has maintained a staff of 25 lifeguards throughout the peak summer season, and about 8 guards during the winter season. Recently, six have been awarded

permanent positions; all are medically trained to EMT-D level, with special rescue training in Swiftwater, Personal Watercraft, Scuba and Cliff Rescue. San Onofre Beach runs a ½ mile long beach with two outlying towers and a headquarters. Del

Mar Beach is about a mile long with three frontline towers, a lagoon tower for small children, and a Main Headquarters. The department is currently negotiating the purchase of new fiberglass towers and new brick headquarters for each facility.

## The Cal Surf News Needs Your Help

by Mike Bartlett, Huntington Beach

In an on-going effort to produce a newsletter that better represents the entire region and to meet our deadlines, we have been offering an incentive program for our members to write articles and generate advertising for the newsletter.

The CSLSA will award \$25 to the authors of the top five articles printed in the Cal Surf News for each issue. In order to qualify for the award the following criteria must be met:

1. CSLSA member in good standing, excluding editorial staff and Board Members.
2. Article must be typed 200 words or more (on floppy disk in IBM format is helpful).
3. Includes a photo related to the story.
4. Submitted prior to the deadline (May 1, Spring Issue/Nov. 1, Fall Issue)

All submissions should be sent Attn. Mike Bartlett, CSLSA Newsletter Editor, HB Lifeguards, 103 PCH, Huntington Beach, CA 92648, (714) 898-6966.

The Editor will select the winners based on newsworthiness, content and creativity of the article and interest to the membership. So let's get motivated and

send in your articles. The idea here is for you to represent your agency and let the readers know what's going on in your chapter, beach, or feature a special story or person.

Additionally, we offer advertising in our newsletter to offset the production costs. If you or someone you know is interested in placing an ad in the 'Cal Surf News', you can earn 10% of the advertising revenue for your chapter. The costs per issue are:

Business Card	\$100
¼ page	\$250
½ page	\$450
full page	\$750

Remember, our newsletter is an excellent business network vehicle that reaches over 1200 lifeguards and 27 various lifesaving agencies throughout our region!

If you have any questions about your newsletter or wish to submit a letter to the editor, or qualify for the article or advertising incentive, please feel free to contact me at the above phone number. Thanks for your support.

# Project WipeOut in San Diego County

By Tom Buckner, Encinitas

*The lifeguards in San Diego County have been working with the TREF (Trauma Research Education Foundation) on getting the new Project Wipeout Beach Safety brochure ready. The finishing touches are being made at the artist's and it should be being printed as you read this.*

Mike Casinelli from TREF, Cal State Lifeguards Mike Silvestri, former Cal State Lifeguard Carl Drake and Encinitas Lifeguard Tom Buckner have met and given their input for the new brochure. Mike Casinelli has repeatedly emphasized that Project WipeOut is "our" project not TREF's. TREF's job was to secure the funding. Since we as professional lifeguards are the users of whatever is developed, it is important that we take "ownership" of the project.

With the help of several lifeguards from various agencies at the October CSLSA meeting in Ventura, it was decided that the San Diego Project WipeOut brochure will be a beach safety brochure with a focus on prevention of C-Spine and other types of beach related injuries. The CSLSA recommended Beach Safety Tips will be included as well a new rip current diagram. In the interim, TREF is contributing \$1,500 toward the printing of the present "Rip Current" brochure so that the lifeguard agencies of San Diego county will receive a portion of those being reproduced by the California State Lifeguards.

While the brochure is being finished, work continues on a coloring book and video. Other plans also include more brochures on various topics including ocean water safety, hazardous marine life, and professional lifeguarding.

It is important to remember that TREF is a foundation set up by the Trauma Centers and EMS system in San Diego County. Their goal is to educate the public on trauma prevention, thereby reducing

the quantities and seriousness of traumas. As a San Diego foundation, they are procuring funds and assisting the local lifeguards in public education efforts.

While TREF is a San Diego based foundation, the sponsors which they have obtained for Project WipeOut are not. These sponsors appear to be very inter-

ested in contributing to a state-wide education effort. It is hoped that if the San Diego area project goes well over the next couple of years and is well received, the same sponsors will contribute to a statewide campaign for beach safety which will benefit all the CSLSA agencies

## The Turtles Have Landed

Salvavidas News by Bob Burnside, Los Angeles County



*The beach at Puerto Escondido is swarming with Turtles... wooden turtles, that is. Business donors have placed the wood hand painted plaques at their business locations. The plaques read, "Turtle Club Member, SWIM NEAR A LIFEGUARD." We hope all USLA affiliated chapters will join the Turtle Club.*

Thanks to the support of many CSLSA agencies, Gobernador Diodor Carrasco representatives set in motion the creation of Mexico's first government administered Lifeguard Division. The Director of Public Protection, Dr. German Cruz, will incorporate the program within his department. The recently USLA trained and certified "Salvavidas" will be respon-

sible for expanding the overall water safety program throughout the State of Oaxaca. Training volunteer groups, establishing junior lifeguard programs, reporting on beach management and environmental issues will be an unprecedented challenge for them.

The newly constructed lifeguard facility was completed just in time for the Mexican Open Pro Surf Championships. Formal Dedication will take place in early Spring 1997. Invitations, the date and official program will be available soon to all interested chapters.

The International Sail Fish Tournament and the Mexico National Pro Open Surfing Championships put the young corps of Lifeguards to their first major test. At the (Continued on p. 7)

# San Diego County Swiftwater Response Committee

by Tom Buckner, Encinitas

The San Diego County Swiftwater Committee, a group of over 24 Fire and Lifeguard agencies, formed to organize swiftwater rescue resources within the county in order to provide coordinated, effective regional interagency rescue, has been meeting regularly over the past year. The committee has achieved many of its goals including: the development of a communica-

and in-water practice of self-rescue techniques. Rescue Team Member and Leader training includes the SFT 1,2, or 3 Certification.

The communication plan has been forwarded to the county's Fire Department Zone Chiefs. It is based on the present mutual aid system. Agencies requesting assistance in a swiftwater incident will be

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*“It is gratifying to see that the work started over a year and a half ago by a group of lifeguards is close to becoming a reality as part of the San Diego County's emergency services response.”*

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tions plan, completed a resource list of equipment, contacts and responders; and, mapped locations of previous and potential incidents.

Committee Chairman Lt. Marshall Parks of the City of San Diego Fire and Lifeguard Services, reports that the recommended training levels have been finished. The Committee has identified four levels of training: Awareness, First Responder, Rescue Team Member, Rescue Team Leader, all of which have varying levels of training associated with them. Work now is focused on having all rescue personnel in the County trained to an Awareness Level so that emergency service personnel will not get into trouble from a lack of knowledge of the dangers associated with swiftwater rescues. A First Responder course is also being put together and is designed for Fire and Law enforcement personnel. This eight hour course offers training for those who are most likely to be first on scene and includes topics of size-up, onshore safety and backup to assist the actual rescue team members

able to request additional resources from their dispatcher and the nearest available Rescue Team or Teams will be sent. It is up to the County Chiefs to send in Letters of Commitment and to authorize the training and equipment purchases necessary to be sure that all the resources in the county are ready and available for use during this year's rainy season.

The Committee will continue to meet in order to practice call-out procedures and ensure participating Teams meet training and equipment standards so those requesting aid will know the caliber of the resources being sent. The Committee is also discussing a general swiftwater safety education campaign aimed at the general public.

It is gratifying to see that the work started over a year and a half ago by a group of lifeguards is close to becoming a reality as part of the San Diego County's emergency services response.

## The Turtles Have Landad

*(Continued from p. 6)*

conclusion of these events, the Events Committee praised the professional manner on which the Salvavidas protected and controlled the events! Congratulations from all of us, Salvavidas!

Expanding the program to meet the full needs of Oaxaca has begun. The volunteer Lifeguards of Zipolite Beach called the "Los Busos Club" have been equipped and trained. Funding for the construction of two portable field towers has been authorized by the USLA, and are under construction. The resort community of Jualtco is presently being organized and equipped, and should be fully operational by Spring 1997.

The first class of 20 junior lifeguards started on November 17, 1996. The community was overwhelmed with enthusiasm.

A special thanks to Turtle Club Members (\$100 donation) Rian Wilkinson, Marine Rescue Company and Mr. Fred Simpson, the Mid-Atlantic and California Regions of the USLA, Bill Richardson, Bob Gabrielson, Marshall Parks, Greg & Reenie Boyer, and Viper Fins for all of their support.

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## Medals of Valor

*(Continued from P. 3)*

Clearly the two lifeguards put their lives on the line in this rescue. Only their experience, and abilities made this rescue possible without serious injuries. For their actions in this heroic effort, USLA President Bill Richardson awarded them the Medal of Valor. Even the circumstance of the presentation was special. Both Murphy and Stephenson were invited to tell their story on the Graham Elliot Show in New York. Unbeknownst to them, Richardson had secretly been invited to make the presentation on national television.

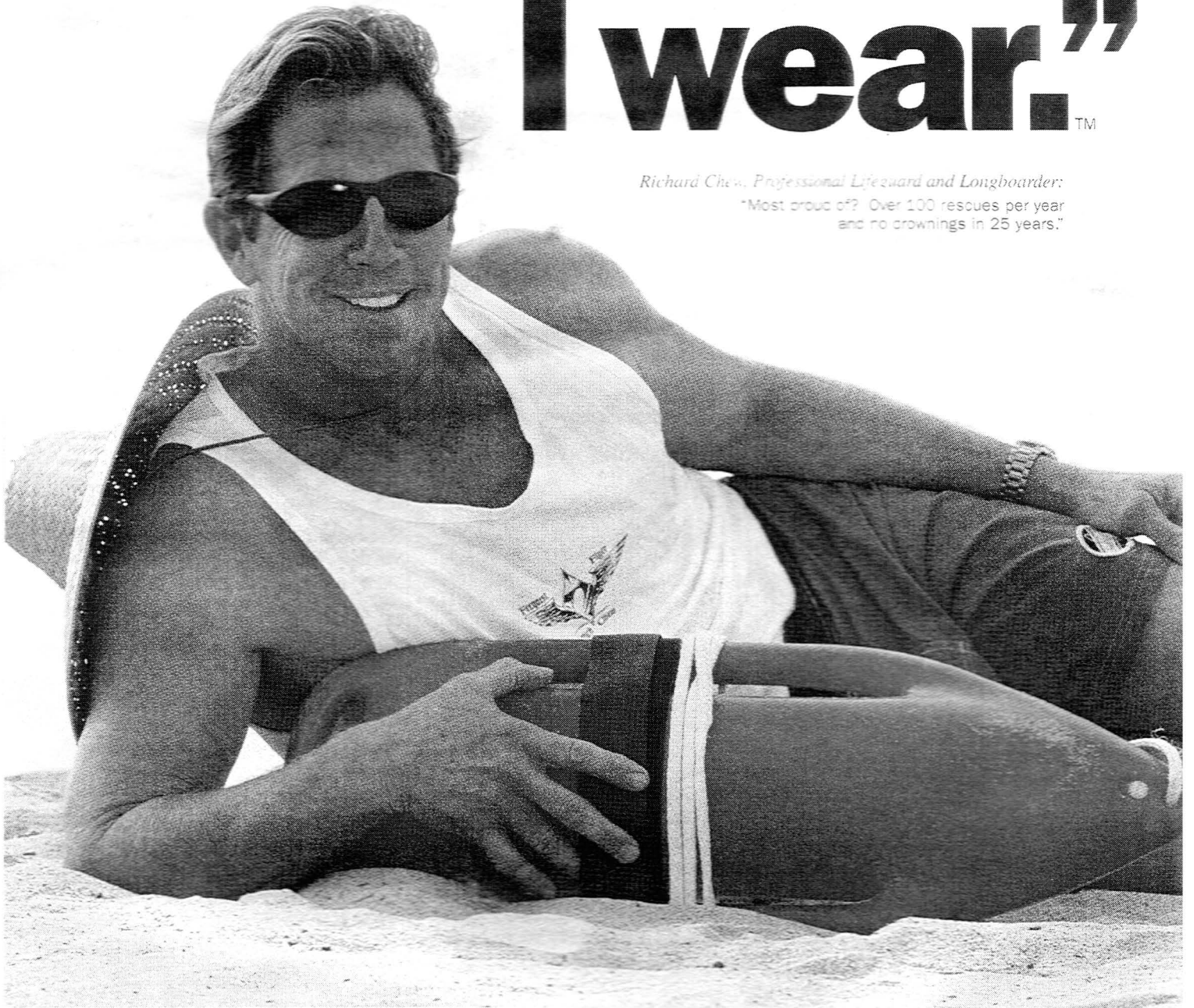
On November 11, President Richardson presented Mike and Tim to the USLA Board of Directors and recounted the story of their heroic rescue. Both guards received a standing ovation from the Board.



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