

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

Spring 2023

The CALSURF

Volume 28 No. 1

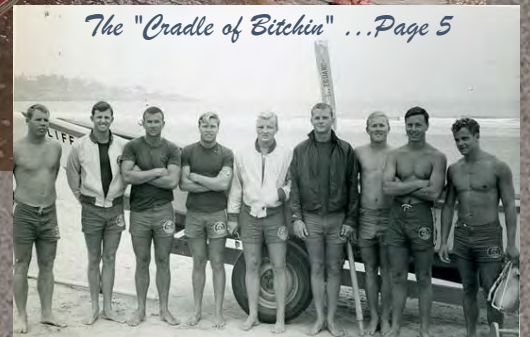
Reaching out...



Photos: Joel Gitelson



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The "Cradle of Bitchin" ...Page 5

2022-23 EXECUTIVE BOARD

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EVENTS CALENDAR 2023

Spring CSLSA 2023 Board of Directors Meeting

Dates: March 30-31, 2023

Location: Long Beach, CA

Spring USLA 2023 Board of Directors Meeting

Dates: April 27-29, 2023

Location: Redondo Beach, CA

2023 California Surf Lifesaving Championships

Dates: July 21-22, 2023

Location: Newport Beach, CA

USLA 2023 Jr. Lifeguard/Lifeguard Nationals

Dates: August 9-12, 2023

Location: Virginia Beach, VA

Fall CSLSA 2023 Board of Directors Meeting

Dates: October 5-6, 2023

Location: San Clemente, CA

Fall USLA 2023 Board of Directors Meeting

Dates: October November 4-5, 2023

Location: (TBA) (Mid-Atlantic Region)

COMMITTEES

Bylaw Committee.....	Bill Richardson & Bob Moore
Certification.....	Vince Lombardi
Exchange.....	Vincent Fiamengo & Leslie Schwene
Fundraising.....	Kelsey Cummings
Grants.....	Diego Busatto & Bryan Etnyre
Junior Lifeguards....	Casey Graham & Chris Egan
Legislation.....	Adam Sandler
Sport & Fitness.....	Jay Butki & Skip Prosser
Membership.....	Charlotte Graham & Leslie Schwene
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Social Media.....	Isiah Mullen
Special Awards	Bill Richardson
Statistics.....	Ian Burton
Training	Mike Silvestri
Ways & Means.....	Tony Sholl
Website.....	Skip Prosser

THE CALSURF NEWS

The
CalSurf News Magazine
is the official publication of the
California Surf Lifesaving Association
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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Bill Humphreys President
California Surf Lifesaving Association

Hello fellow lifeguards!

Welcome to spring – an exciting time of year for lifeguards in our region. Whether you are working on the beach, are off at school, or you're at a winter job away from lifeguarding, summer is just around the corner – along with all of the challenges it brings. This is the time to prepare. Just like rehearsing for a play before it opens, it's time to get back in shape if you haven't been working out, get into the water and re-familiarize yourself if you took off for the winter, and refresh yourself on your medical aid skills. Many of you have been doing this year 'round, so you're ahead of the game – which is great.

Over the winter, our association via our dedicated volunteers, has also been working hard to prepare. Working to help create training programs, advance professional standards, assist Junior Lifeguard programs, coordinate our summer competitions, and promote beach and ocean safety. In addition to our ongoing committee meetings and Board of Directors meetings, we've been fortunate to have the USLA Board of

Director's meeting hosted in our region, in Redondo Beach. Something which happens only once every four years or so. Hopefully, many of you have an opportunity to attend.

As you prepare for summer, and regardless of whether you're retired or a rookie in training, remember that you're a *Lifeguard for Life!* Enjoy this season of anticipation and excitement as spring comes to bloom and summer quickly approaches. And, be thankful that you have been given the abilities and talents to serve others in such a noble profession.

Use those talents well, be safe, and have fun.

You are a true hero. You are *Lifeguards for Life!*

Thank you.

Bill

Bill Humphreys
CSLSA President



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

Congratulations to the Following Award Recipients:



**MEDAL OF
VALOR AWARD**



Brandon Gherardi – Manhattan Beach

While on patrol near 40th Street in Manhattan Beach, Lifeguard Brandon Gherardi observed Adam Bradford, an experienced surfer, as he was struck by a massive set wave and held underwater far too long. After the wave passed, Gherardi then observed Bradford approximately 200 yards offshore face down and not moving. Gherardi responded in his lifeguard unit, calling for additional resources. He then entered the water with his fins and rescue tube.

Meanwhile another surfer made contact with Bradford pulling him onto his own surfboard and waited for Gherardi's help. Once he made contact, Gherardi discovered the victim was in full cardiac arrest.

Because the incident was too far removed for a response via the Baywatch rescue boat, Lifeguard Gherardi began swimming the victim along with assisting surfer toward shore. While in the surf zone, wave action caused the surfer's leash and the rescue tube line to entangle all three of them. Once again the three were struck by a large set of waves, even while Gherardi was trying to untangle the lines. Gherardi kept the victim's head out of the water and continued progress back to the beach.

As they approached the shore, Gherardi signaled his lifeguard back-up for assistance as he carried Bradford past the berm to a flat area on the beach. Even though exhausted from the rescue effort and carrying the victim up the beach away from the water, Lifeguard Gherardi took charge of the scene, facilitating set-up of the Bag Valve Mask, AED, and backboard. He performed flawless CPR and shocked Bradford twice with the AED. After the second shock, the patient regained a spontaneous cardiac pulse.

The victim was released to other emergency personnel and transported to the hospital. Bradford was

treated at the hospital where he made a full recovery.

For his heroic rescue actions under extremely hazardous conditions, and for performing extraordinary medical assistance once back on the beach, Brandon Gherardi was awarded the California Surf Lifesaving and United States Lifesaving Association's Medals of Valor.

Brandon will receive his medals at the USLA Board of Director's meeting in Redondo Beach on April 27, 2023.



**HEROIC ACT
AWARD**



Thomas Glessing – Laguna Beach

On Sunday, March 20, 2022, Ocean Lifeguard Thomas Glessing was stationed at Victoria Beach located in Laguna Beach. At approximately 11:45 a.m., Glessing observed three victims caught in a large rip current approximately 1/3 of a mile south in a remote area known as Christmas Cove. Glessing immediately ran to the cove and directed nearby patrons to call 9-1-1. While in route to their location, Glessing observed that the three victims included two females attempting to rescue a child.

Lifeguard Glessing made contact with the victims, assessed their individual circumstances and assisted them to shore. Once on shore he performed a quick assessment of the victims resulting in two of the three patients being transported to Laguna Beach Mission Hospital for further medical assessment and treatment for water inhalation. Both were released later that day.

For his decisive and immediate actions in extreme circumstances, Thomas Glessing was awarded the California Surf Lifesaving Association and United States Lifesaving Association's Heroic Act Awards.

Thomas will receive his awards at the CSLSA Board of Director's meeting in Long Beach on March 30, 2023.

KAMUA'O ~ MENTORS

A. Lee Brown | Author | Writer | Professor



Born in Texas and raised in Point Loma, California, Lee attended the same schools as did his wife and, later, their children. After graduating from high school, Brown worked for Scripps Institute of Oceanography and in 1960 became a deputized marine safety officer and ocean lifeguard for the City of San Diego; a job allowing the completion of two college degrees.



AT THE CORE of the *Cradle's* story, is mentoring. Like so many western traditions, this practice began in ancient Greece 3000 years ago when the King of Ithaca, Odysseus, hired a man named Mentor to guide the development of his son while dad went off to war. In this manner, mentoring was conducted by a wiser, experienced, non-family member willing to share his or her wisdom with a younger protégé.

own through the ages, this task has changed considerably to the point it is now franchised commercially. In the modern world, mentors have become hired tutors, for specific purposes and whose general task is to groom young professionals, primarily for career advancement.

HISTORIC ROOTS ~ Mentioned previously, my mentors were beach boys, lifeguards, and watermen of the "second generation." These were fellows who had, in turn, been guided by their own prior generation of beach boys and lifeguards. A deep gratitude is owed to these fellows; men who sought to protect and pass along necessary skills to help us navigate the treacherous shoals of adolescence. What they shared went beyond how to surf, dive, and understand basic physical oceanography. Above all else, we were given lessons on setting

personal limits, facing adversity, and living by an unwritten code of right and wrong.

HAWAIIAN KAPU ~ Much of what we learned was a modified version of what had been part of Polynesian life for centuries known as "Kings *Kapu*." In its original format, the *Kapu* was a list of what was forbidden to commoners. It also legitimated a three-layered society consisting of: (1) *Ali'i*, or inherited royal elites; (2) *Kahunas*, or priests; and (3) *Makaainana*, or commoners. These rules protected the luxuriance of the *Ali'i* while reducing social rancor. This was nothing new since Europe had also adopted the Divine Right of King's in the 12th century.

The *Kapu* had a huge impact on Hawaiian water sports. For example, only the *Ali'i* could use surfboards longer than 12 feet and made from sturdy Williwili wood while the *Makaainana's* boards were shaped from inferior Koa trees. Similar exclusions forbade commoners from wearing certain clothing, eating foods, and enjoying limited entertainment. Penalties for violating the *Kapu* were severe, such as death for any poor devil that accidentally looked into the face of the King or surfed at his beach.

When King Kamehameha I inherited the throne, he sought to unite all of the Hawaiian Islands and relaxed some aspects of the *Kapu*. After he died in 1819, his favorite wife, Queen Ka'ahumanu, went even further establishing a gentler way of life not based on caste. Keeping her young son (the new King) content with other distractions, she revised many Polynesian traditions. It was about this time, that the role of *Kumu a'o* emerged as one who takes an active part in the education of young Hawaiians by stressing the skills and ethics of a waterman's tradition. Islander mentors were careful to not only impart oceanic skills, but also stress *Lōkahi*, or the unity between the sea and civilization.

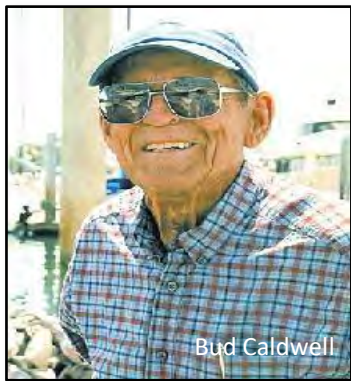
Looking back, the importation of the waterman tradition to the mainland's west coast



was mostly attributable to southern California beach boys who---as GIs---were stationed in Hawaii during World War II. Those servicemen who surfed and interacted with native Hawaiians were very influenced by the *aloha* spirit. After hostilities ended, they returned to places like Ocean Beach and planted the beach life in fertile sand. The first generation of returning servicemen helped spawn a second generation of *Kumu a'o* and it was these fellows who helped guide my generation, through the 1950s and into the early 1960s.

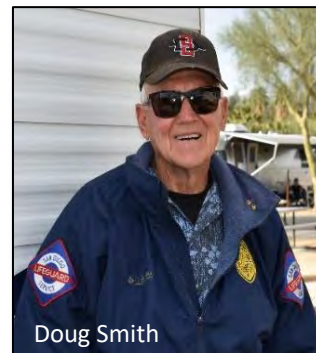
Of course, this linkage was not universal or organized. As energetic adolescents hanging around the beach, we never had a specific individual as a personal mentor. Instead, we were guided by a dozen or so watermen who adhered to a loosely held mutual pact of unwritten rules passed on by their own guides in the late 1940s. By and large, we learned our watermanship from the second generation of beachboys who exposed us to this wonderful way of life.

Beginning at Pescadero Beach, my cohorts and I were gradually assimilated into the world of beach boys and lifeguards. At first, the lessons focused on water safety, beach etiquette and some fundamental oceanography. These spontaneous tutorials did not occur at preset times or in an organized manner. It wasn't uncommon to learn simply by listening to the banter of older beach boys while standing around a campfire or sitting astride surfboards waiting for the next set of waves.



Simply stated, these individuals were powerful influences to whom we gave deference. Sometimes, Bud Caldwell would show us how to prepare delicious sculpin by being careful to remove its excruciatingly painful thorn spikes. Or the time Hal Krupens improved my abalone diving by demonstrating how to swim upside down under reef ledges where they were attached.

In other instances, lessons were often triggered by an event. For example, in 1959, a diver named Bob Pamperin disappeared off La Jolla Cove. The consensus was he had been the victim of a great white shark. Leery and concerned about the implications of the incident, we asked Doug Smith about it. In our world, men like Smith commanded respect, seven years my senior he was a permanent lifeguard, beach boy who had grown up in the *Cradle* and served in the U.S. Army. To calm our obvious apprehension, Doug explained that while Whites are the most dangerous sharks in California waters, chances of being attacked are very rare. Taking the lesson further, he said the attack signal to watch for is when a shark lowers its pectoral fins and swims toward you in a zig-zag pattern.



Similar lessons often followed events on the beach. Senior guard Bob Baxley was fond of turning a genuine rescue into a teaching moment. Always concerned for ocean safety, he was relentless in making sure we understood the mechanics of rip currents on sandy beaches and why they were different from rock beaches. One day, after having pulled a young girl out of a robust rip, he gathered several of us together and asked, "Why are rip currents more treacherous at high tide?" After indulging a few incorrect youthful guesses, the waterman explained high tides have larger amounts of water in need of an escape route seaward. "As a result," he continued, "seawater will follow gravity until it finds a depression in the bottom sand then turn seaward." Bwana also made sure we understood

there was no such thing as an “undertow,” but a situation that happens when an unwary swimmer steps into a depression. No longer able to touch bottom sand, he explained, the victim panics as he is being swept seaward.

Certainly, there were other imperatives as part of our tutelage; most made sense, others could require more rigorous thought. Many of the rules had to do with surfing etiquette and were designed to thwart rude behavior such as language around girls, respect for elders, and always following through on tasks undertaken.

The right-of-way rule while surfing was nuanced and learned primarily via experience. For example, once in my early days of learning the code I was riding a medium size wave at the cliffs toward shore. Two older surfers were paddling out and instead of stopping my ride or trying to ride beyond them, I cut between them. Coming too close, one of the men, I later learned, was Marsh Malcolm, who scolded, “Hey, asseyes, that’s number one.” I didn’t want to find out what was number two!

Another right-of-way violation was dropping into a wave when another surfer was already coming your way. Not only was it rude, but potentially dangerous causing an unanticipated defensive maneuver. In fact, violation of this rule is still a frequent cause of water altercations.

In similar fashion, we were told to always help others in distress. It’s one thing to lose your board in small waves, in huge surf it can be life threatening. Bob Simmons was an experienced surfer who drowned in September of 1954 at Windansea. Mark Foo and Sion Milosky were big waves riders from Hawaii who drowned at Mavericks near Half-Moon Bay in 1994 and 2011 respectively. Oahu’s north shore wears the undisputed crown of lethality where Ehukai State Park’s---known as Banzai Pipeline---has drowned seven surfers.

A classic example of surfers having a selfless obligation to help others took place in the fall of 1961. Dave DeVore, was a senior at Point Loma High and being a strong and excellent surfer, had entered the U.S. Surfing Association’s West Coast Championship at Huntington Beach, California. It was a big event and one which, incidentally, had been

won the previous year by another friend and neighbor, Dave Willingham (1960’s Junior Men’s Champion).

A group of surfers was warming up for their heats when DeVore caught a head-high wave, banked left and reached down to perform a rail grab when another surfer entered the same wave and collided with him causing a serious head laceration. Windansea surfer Butch Van Artsdalen witnessed the wreck and pulled the semi-conscious DeVore onto his board and took him to the beach. Despite being a favorite to win that year’s competition, he borrowed a car and drove the injured DeVore to the hospital. By the time Dave was stitched and they returned to the contest, Van Artsdalen had been disqualified for missing his heat.

Watching out for each other became a personal lesson in the spring of 1956. I had just turned 16 when a huge swell arrived from the north Pacific. Determined to demonstrate our “hair,” Ron Oldham, and I ditched class to give the big surf a go. Parked above the Garbage reef break at Sunset Cliffs, we watched as sets with faces of 8 to 10 feet rolled in on a regular basis. Although terrified, yet reluctant to admit it, we waxed our boards and paddled out at the foot of Ladera Street. At that age, I could best be described as a scrawny kid, wearing cutoff cotton sweatpants, endowed with rubber band arms and two legs that could vibrate like banjo strings when I was cold. Exchanging faux smiles, Ron and I paddled into an angry sea. Once outside the surf line, we parted ways, being a goofy foot, he went south to AB as I stroked toward North Garbage. Cold and scared, I kept my small and light Velzy further asea to ensure safety. Only when I was well beyond the breaking surf line, did it become chillingly apparent---I was alone.

It’s striking how oblivious adolescents can be about their welfare until it’s too late. Ron was nowhere in sight and the surf was starting to close out in both directions. Suddenly a set of massive waves



appeared behind me. Paddling hard for their shoulders the Velzy barely made it over each double overhead face. If I had tried to take off and lost the board it would have been a life-threatening, dumb-ass mistake.

Glancing south, Oldham was still nowhere in sight and all I could see were enormous waves in both directions. Overwhelmed with fear, my best bet was to stay asea and try to paddle north to see if there was a safer place to attempt returning to shore. Maybe Pescadero, and if that didn't work, the next place was Ocean Beach with its vigilant and permanent lifeguard station. With glum resignation, the Velzy and I headed north when an odd thought intervened--I wondered what was happening in third period American history.

Dale Velzy had designed my board to make short abrupt turns, not glide over long distances. As a result, it was an exacting struggle just to get even with Luscomb's Point. It was also clear neither Luscomb's break nor No Surf beach were going to be accessible as waves were breaking even further out over the Indicator reef. Eventually, Osprey Point came into view along with a miraculous lull in sets--a window of opportunity! Desperation overruled judgement as I frantically paddled toward shore hoping a rideable wave might appear. About halfway in, a medium wave was building behind me. The swell lifted the Velzy until it began to follow gravity down the face. Under those conditions, it would have been much safer to remain prone on the board, no fancy stuff, no walking the nose, no arching turns, just get the hell into calmer water. But I didn't. Instead, I was beginning to



Lt. Mike Considine

stand just as the board's skeg caught a kelp bundle sending me into the water. The Velzy continued on, eventually reaching shore in a rocky small cove just north of Osprey Point. It was a high stakes gamble with two options---forget the Velzy and swim to the

point or try and recover it then paddle back out to the point. In either case it was an imminently unfair situation being posed to a frightened adolescent. Not only had it taken months of scrimping and

saving while bagging groceries at Safeway to purchase the Velzy, it was my identity and most prized possession.

I started swimming toward the cove neglecting to think about an exit strategy. That oversight became a serious problem. Getting to the board was relatively easy, getting back out was not. No matter how hard I tried to break through the nonstop waves, it was useless. Hypothermia was taking over and my situation weakened.

The direness of my ordeal hadn't gone unnoticed as a sizeable crowd was gathering atop the cliffs above. Two men on the edge of the crowd



remained silent, watching the situation with folded arms. Nodding to one another, they began down an access path leading to Osprey Point. Reaching the water, my rescuers disrobed and swam to me

in their BVDs. As they got closer, I recognized Jim (Mouse) Robb and Mike Considine, both former City Lifeguards, well-known beach boys, and excellent watermen. Their calm manner was reassuring as Mike took the Velzy and began paddling out while Mouse led me to the base of the cliffs where high tide waves were crashing. Shouting over the noise, he demonstrated how to deal with approaching waves by turning to face the cliff with legs apart and arms extended to brace against the sandstone cliff. Once a wave had broken over our backs, we'd scamper along the rocky bottom until another wave made it necessary to repeat the drill.

It took a while until all three were safe and the precious Velzy was by my side. I cannot say for sure those men saved my life that day, but their courage instilled a strategic life lesson; one welded into memory and used often years later as a rock guard in La Jolla.

As time has moved on, so have Considine and Oldham. When Mouse Robb recently became seriously ill, I made a special trip to see him. Sitting in Jim's living room I tried to share how much his tu-

telage had helped define my own life. It went without saying we both knew what was coming and he died two weeks later.

Robb and Considine, were of a generation of watermen who had, in turn, learned from their own prior mentors; men I have referred to as “Generation I.” Out of this esteemed group, it was my privilege to know personally only two men: Alexander “Bud” Caldwell, and Raymond Leon (Skeeter) Malcolm.

When I was a kid, Caldwell was the Lion of the *Cradle*, a recognized waterman, sailor, and inventive surfboard designer. He and his wife Mary Jane had graduated from San Diego High in 1942 and married soon after. Toward the end of World War II, Bud was a Navy pilot flying a variety of aircraft and later yard manager for Kettenburg Boat works on Shelter Island. His love of the ocean



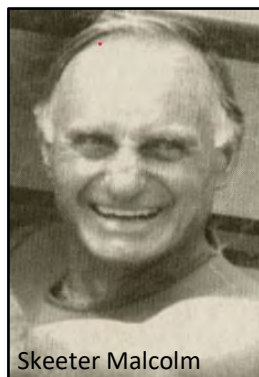
TOOLS NOT TOYS

was deep and sincere, allowing him to adapt his skills as a master boat keeper to design and build experimental surfboards.

Despite a sixteen-year difference in ages, our lives crossed frequently. Bud’s gentleness was the hallmark of his persona along with an impish grin and willingness to help anyone in need. During the sixty years we knew each other I never heard him utter a swear word or backstab anyone with a snide remark. Bud Caldwell was a gentleman of the first order and a great example of the southern California adaptation of the Hawaiian waterman’s code. Among Caldwell’s many credits was helping to establish the original Sunset Cliffs Surf Club. One of my most profound *Cradle* memories occurred in 1957, when Bud signed my membership card and handed me a key to the locked gate to one of the best surfing spots on the west coast.

Years later, Kathy and I bought a home across the street from the Caldwell family. It brought great joy to our lives including sailing with him and

Mary Jane on their 32-foot Kettenburg sloop, *Onion Truck* plus meeting their kids Janie and Alex.



Skeeter Malcolm

Two other men were revered around the *Cradle*; the Malcolm brothers. The eldest, Raymond (Skeeter) graduated from PLHS in 1940 and his brother, Marshal (Scooter) followed a decade later. They were lifeguards who became professional educators and

coaches. Both men were also in the elite group of mentors; Skeeter in the first generation, and Marsh in the second.

Skeeter had been a member of the original surfers who frequented Sunset Cliffs in the 1930s and 1940s. His closest friends began calling him “Big Kahuna.” When WW II came along, Ensign Malcolm saw action during the horrendous sea battle for Okinawa in 1945 aboard the carrier *Lunga Point*. At war’s end, Skeeter returned to lifeguarding while completing his preparation for a career in education. After years of coaching and teaching at Point Loma High, Skeeter Malcolm became a school administrator in charge of several schools around San Diego and never gave up surfing.

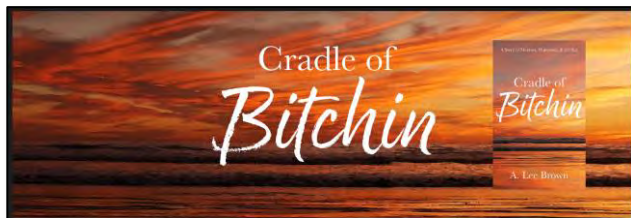
Taking his own place in the next generation, Marsh Malcolm was also an outstanding athlete. Whereas Skeeter excelled in basketball, Marsh was an all-star football player whose broken field running earned the nickname “Scooter.” Both brothers were ocean lifeguards and Marsh led the Crawford High Colts as varsity head coach for years.

A TURNING POINT ~ For many years Kathy and I maintained a domicile in Point Loma, punctuated by temporary residences elsewhere like Minnesota, England and Texas. As our careers dictated, one could say during that period the Brown family lived “on” the *Cradle* but not “in” it.

The costs of that lifestyle came to a head on a Friday in the spring of 1988. Kathy had gone to Montreal to a medical conference while I met academic obligations in Los Angeles, Houston, and San Francisco. Returning home exhausted, we poured a glass of wine and began serious parsing.

The lure of careers and income had blinded us to what was really important in life; our kids were growing up fast without us. The answer was easy. We adjusted our lives accordingly and, despite taking whopper pay cuts, it was the best decision we ever made. Soon we were spending more quality time with each other and our kids.

In addition to coaching my son's little league I began surfing again. John Holly shaped me a new board and I was feeling great, riding waves, wearing South Coast T-shirts, and paddling out with former mentors. About the same time, Bud Caldwell began taking me to Tourmaline Canyon where Skeeter, Marsh, and others of all ages would surf early then gather around Skeeter's Travel-All to drink coffee, share donuts, and listen to Hawaiian music. What struck me as especially sweet, was that the group's ages ranged from ten to seventy. A new generation of watermen was in the making.



Amazon purchase available at www.leebrown.com

A Lifeguard for Life: In Memory of Kirby Gordon



Kirby Gordon

Photo/article submitted by Austin Trinkle

Long Beach Lifeguards suffered a loss last October, with the passing of local legend Kirby

Gordon. Kirby started as a seasonal guard in the late 60s and continued to serve with the department for 50 years. With his calm natural leadership, his kind and generous nature, and his penchant for healthy competition, Kirby Gordon was an inspirational influence on anyone who met him.

When friends and colleagues remember Kirby, a few common traits come up: passionate, competitive, compassionate, and kind. "He's not the kind of guy

who'd lie to make you feel better," explains longtime friend and fellow guard, Tim Murphy, "but he was always willing to give his time, his knowledge, and his help to whoever needed it." Former Chiefs Paul Wawrzynski and Mark Boone share similar sentiments: "He was gregarious, approachable, and fun to be around. He was brilliant and did things for other people all the time—but you'd never hear about it from him."

Kirby's competitiveness and compassion combined were able to shine during Long Beach Lifeguards' 3-on-3 basketball tournaments. Kirby was a basketball star throughout his days at St. Anthony's High School, Long Beach City College, and UC Riverside. He brought those skills in earnest when playing against his friends and coworkers. "His team almost always walked away with the trophy," remembers Boone. When a fellow lifeguard passed away in his thirties, Kirby organized the tournament into a fundraiser, so all the proceeds could go towards the education of the lost friend's young son.

As Kirby pushed himself to be the best in anything he tried, he inspired his fellow lifeguards to do the same. Anyone working the beach with Kirby knew if he was there, one thing was certain: they'd be doing a "Kirby Taplin." The run-swim-paddle event was a favorite of his, to keep his fellow guards in shape, as well as to instill that sense of competition among the ranks. "You'd see him with that clipboard and know you wouldn't be going home without finishing a Taplin," remembers Boone. It didn't matter whether Kirby was your area supervisor that day or not, he would get everyone he could in on the event. "The esprit de corps, as he called it, came from everyone suffering together," jokes Wawrzynski. The Kirby Taplin graduated from a daily PT workout to become its own event in Long Beach's intra-departmental competition, the Dutch Miller Invitational. The event lives on as his legacy, a reminder of his devotion and commitment

to the continual betterment of the Long Beach Lifeguards.

When it came to emergency



situations, Kirby Gordon was a presence you wanted around. Even if he wasn't taking the lead on a rescue, his calm demeanor set the tone for the rest of the team. "It was an unspoken style of leadership," shares Wawrzynski. "He exuded leadership without saying a word." Kirby was never afraid to take on the necessary role, to do what he could to help, whether that be taking charge or acting as crowd control. "He looked forward to those situations in the sense that he knew it was the reason he was there," explains Murphy.

Though Kirby led a distinguished professional career across the disciplines of law and real estate, he always considered himself a lifeguard first. He used his skills in those professional fields to be an advocate for Long Beach Lifeguards, especially when liaising with the city. Even when he wasn't able to work the beach as much as he would have liked, Kirby always kept his certifications up to date. Fellow guards who were lucky enough to be at the same recertification session as him would be treated to Super Mex during their lunch break, where Kirby would take the opportunity to give a short speech. "He would talk about the importance of lifeguarding; of the work we do. He'd express his deep devotion to the department and hoped to inspire the younger guards to feel the same way," shares Murphy. "He would express how fortunate we all are to be a part of the great thing that is ocean lifeguarding, and how we should never take it for granted." Kirby lived the truth of those words he shared; he led by example.

Before he passed, Kirby was recognized for his passion and influence with his induction into Long Beach's Lifeguard Hall of Fame. Even in his final days, he held closely the memories of his truest passion, as he wore his lifeguard uniform shirt in hospice. "When someone is passionate about what they do, people can see it," says Murphy. "He will always be remembered for that."



Joel Gitelson Returns to Ecuador for His Eleventh Year!



Joel Gitelson is a retired LA County Lifeguard/Paramedic, avid photographer, and continues to collect winning medals at both lifeguard and bodysurfing championships.

This is Joel Gitelson's 11th year providing assistance, donating equipment, and funding the needs to our close friends: the local lifeguards of Montañita, Ecuador and adjacent beaches. His traveling team is typically comprised of Santa Barbara City and LA County



Photos: Joel Gitelson

lifeguards, among a few others. Montañita is a small town on the southern coast of the country, with a large beach stretching about 2 miles and full north/south Pa-

cific exposure often yielding powerful overhead surf and very fast rips. The population is small, but every year during the Carnival holiday thousands of tourists travel to the town. The local lifeguards are stretched very thin: aside from not being reliably paid, they are better equipped but outnumbered to effectively handle the number of rescues that occur. Past years typically yield 200 rescues or more over the four days between 10 locals and about 6 traveling volunteers. They provide what they can in the way of fins, rescue cans and straps, binoculars, whistles, sunscreen, sunglasses, funding for towers, training equipment, etc. All things they need but are difficult to get. The Red Shorts Foundation is our nonprofit that assists with fund raising efforts. Our ultimate goals are to adequately equip the local guards year-round, help construct beach safety infrastructure as in towers and a HQ and build on community support for their efforts.



This is entirely a charitable trip and not for the weak of body, soul, or mind. The Red Shorts Foundation cannot yet completely sponsor volunteer guards. Individual costs for the week typically are: flight \$700-800, shared room \$120, food/drink (cheap) depending on your appetite/thirst. Plan on about \$1400 all totaled.

"I can personally say traveling to Montañita is about the most worthwhile thing I've done in my life, a sentiment shared by many alumni. You will make rescues. You will make a difference. AND you will be appreciated!!"

"I encourage anyone interested in going in 2024 to contact me for specifics."

--Joel Gitelson

For more information

joel77st@sbcglobal.net

<https://m.facebook.com/lifeguard.montanita>

<https://m.facebook.com/montanitaoficial/redshortsfoundation.org>

In Memoriam:

Section Chief Tom Viren



Tom or Chief Viren was very active in LACOLA and helped shape the organization it is today. He was involved with the formation of the Surf Life Saving Association early on in his career. As a leader, mentor, advisor to many. Husband, father, and long-time friend to many, Tom will be missed.

Jeanne Gray

Beloved wife of Life Member Gordon Gray, Jeanne usually traveled with Gordon to both the CSLSA and USLA board meetings and was treasured by the other traveling wives and friends. They were married for 49 years.



A Quick Look at the
Long Beach Fire Department Lifeguards
Host of the

Spring 2023 CSLSA BOD Meeting

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

**Affiliated Agency:
Long Beach Fire Department**

- Creation: 1906
- Shoreline Guarded: 9 Miles
- Permanent Lifeguards: 27
- Seasonal Lifeguards: 140
- Rescues 2021: 4,222
- Junior Lifeguards 2021: 1,215

Long Beach Lifeguards are responsible for the safe and lawful use of the 9 miles of beaches, 5,300 acres of oceanfront property, waterways, and marinas of the City of Long Beach. Additionally, the Marine Safety Division is responsible for the public safety of the 4,000 pleasure-craft moored in the City's marinas and responding to water emergencies in the City's rivers and lakes. The Marine Safety Division consists of 27 full time employees, divided among boat and beach operations, with 140 seasonal personnel.

Marine Safety Chief: Gonzalo Medina

Phone: (562) 570-1360

Agency Contact: Skip Prosser

3rddelegate@cslsa.org