

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

Spring 2025

The CALSURF

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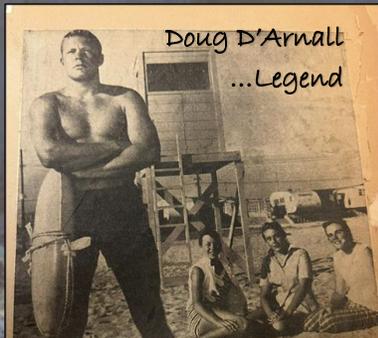
Eyes on the Water!

Photo by Steve Himes

New Zealand Lifeguard
Exchange



Doug D'Arnall
...Legend



The Ventura Surf Rescue
Association



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EVENTS CALENDAR 2025

Spring 2025 USLA Board of Directors Meeting

Dates: April 15-17, 2025

Location: Newport, RI (New England Region)

2025 California Surf Lifesaving Championships

Dates: July 25-26, 2025

Location: Dockweiler State Beach , CA

2025 USLA Jr. Lifeguard/Lifeguard Nationals

Dates: August 6-9, 2025

Location: Huntington State Beach, CA

Fall 2025 CSLSA Board of Directors Meeting

Dates: April 9 & 10, 2025

Location: Crystal Cove/Laguna Beach, CA

Fall 2025 USLA Board of Directors Meeting

Dates: November 7-9, 2024

Location Coeur D' Alene, ID (Northwest Region)

COMMITTEES

Bylaw Committee.....	Bob Moore
Certification.....	Vince Lombardi
Exchange.....	Casey Graham & Vianne Kelly
Fundraising.....	Brandi White & Byron Kine
Grants.....	Nikki Bryant
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Public Education.....	Lola Swank & Devon Beebe
Public Info. Officer...	Adam Sandler
Public Relations.....	Coral Kemp
Social Media.....	Isaiah Mullen
Special Awards	Austin Trinkle & Bill Richardson
Statistics.....	Ian Burton
Training	Nick Giugni
Ways & Means.....	Tony Sholl
Website.....	Steve Himes

THE CALSURF NEWS

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Meritorious & Heroic Act Award



The Break Wall Incident

On February 4th, 2024, the fifty' sailing vessel "Flying fiche 2" with nineteen persons on board was competing in the "Gate to Gate" race outside the Long Beach Federal break wall. Gale-force winds and rough seas caused the mast to fail and fall overboard. Rescue Boat 1 Captain Don Wetteland, Fire Captain/Paramedic Keith Dixon, and Marine Safety Officers Chris Gonzales and Chase McColl responded to the distress call. Severe wind conditions caused the vessel to break apart against the rocks and sink. Eleven victims made their way onto the rocks of the Break wall. Rescue swimmers Balsillie, Gonzales, and McColl extracted all eleven victims onto the safety of the Rescue Boats. All nineteen victims were accounted for and transported to Alamitos Bay for further medical evaluation. For their heroic actions, **Will Mathison & Don Wetteland** be hereby awarded the California Surf Lifesaving Association and the United States Lifesaving Association's *Meritorious Act Awards*.

Chris Gonzales & Tristan Balsillie are awarded the California Surf Lifesaving Association and the United States Lifesaving Association's *Heroic Act Awards*.



VALOR & HEROIC ACT AWARD



The Death Rocks Incident

On July 10th, 2024, at 6:15 PM, a 911 call alerted authorities to a water rescue at "Death Rocks" off West Cliff Drive, where two victims had been swept into the ocean by strong swells. **Marine Safety Officer Brendan Daly** of the Santa Cruz Fire Department responded and entered the water despite injuring himself. He located the unresponsive victims— a male and a pregnant female— securing them for rescue. Daly began swimming against the current towards the nearest beach while signaling for assistance. Lifeguard Carter Baginski joined him in the effort. Given

the challenging conditions, they decided to swim further out to meet a Harbor Patrol boat. Once aboard, CPR was administered for an hour, but unfortunately, the victims did not survive. For their bravery, **Brendan Daly** received the *Medal of Valor*, while **Carter Baginski** earned the *Heroic Act Award* from the California Surf Lifesaving Association and the United States Lifesaving Association.



Meritorious & Heroic Act Award



Huntington Beach Pier Incident

On Sunday, November 11, 2023, at 12:26am, **California State Park Peace Officer Cameron Faris** responded to a mutual aid call from the Huntington Beach Police Department for a subject who had jumped off the end of the Huntington Beach Pier and was screaming for help.

Faris responded "code 3" from Pacific Coast Highway and Golden West Street, approximately one mile away. The victim was holding on to a ring buoy and floating away from the pier.

Faris arrived at the base of the pier, doffed his police gear, and located his rescue buoy and fins. Huntington Beach Police escorted Faris to the end of the pier. He located the victim, jumped off the pier, and swam to the victim.

The victim, an adult male, was conscious and breathing and compliant to instruction. Faris secured the victim in his rescue buoy and began swimming to shore. Faris brought the victim back to shore with assistance from Huntington Beach Marine Safety Captain Todd Bartlett.

For his decisive actions in recognizing the victims' plight, and their appropriate lifesaving actions, **Cameron Faris** is hereby awarded the California Surf Lifesaving Association and the United States Lifesaving Association's *Meritorious Act Awards*



JOHN WAYNE
CANCER FOUNDATION



Meritorious & Heroic Act Award



River Channel Incident

On January 22nd, 2024, a vehicle traveling over one hundred miles per hour launched over the center divider of a bridge on Studebaker Road in Long Beach, falling into the Los Cerritos Channel below. Initial 911 reports failed to recognize this was a bridge over water, resulting in a truck and engine company being dispatched without lifeguard units.

Off-duty Marine Safety Battalion Chief Scott Dixon, passing by the scene, identified the need for lifeguards and called dispatch. **Marine Safety Officer Chris Gonzales arrived**, and Dixon set the point last seen buoy, while Gonzales began a primary search in the zero-visibility environment. The Long Beach Marine Safety Dive Team, LBFD US&R, and the LA County Heavy Wrecker were requested for additional support.

Rescue Boat Captain James Reinheimer entered the water and extracted the driver, who was transported to a local hospital. As Gonzales and Reinheimer continued searching, they found a second patient trapped inside the vehicle. Despite their efforts, the patient could not be freed until the vehicle was removed from the water and was determined to be deceased.

For his decisive actions, **Scott Dixon** is awarded the California Surf Lifesaving Association and United States Lifesaving Association's *Meritorious Act Awards*. **Chris Gonzales, Will Mathison, Kevin Bradley, and James Reinheimer** are awarded the *Heroic Act Awards* for their lifesaving actions.



Heroic Act Award



The PCH Incident

On November 20, 2023, **State Park Officer/Lifeguard Justin Quiggle, along with Officers Wolfe and Valenzuela**, were on duty at Bolsa Chica State Beach. At 11:09pm, Officer Quiggle heard a 911 dispatch for a car in the water near Pacific Coast Highway and Warner Avenue. Huntington Beach Police located the vehicle using their drone, three quarters of a mile south of the dispatch location. The vehicle was found vertical in the water, with the front end submerged into the mud. Officer Quiggle entered the water, searched around the deployed airbag, located the victim, extricated her through the window, and brought her to the surface. With assistance from Huntington Beach Police, Quiggle moved the victim up the muddy embankment to begin patient care. Quiggle then returned to the vehicle to clear the backseat for further occupants but was unsuccessful due to debris and visibility. Officer Valenzuela entered the water in full SCUBA gear and determined there were no further occupants. For his heroic lifesaving actions, **Justin Quiggle** is awarded the California Surf Lifesaving Association and United States Lifesaving Association's *Heroic Act Awards*.



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.

Hughes Fire erupts at Castaic Lake

By Steve Himes (Photos: Steve Himes, Brittany Orduno)



On January 22, 2025, a wildfire broke out in the Elizabeth Canyon area, located north of Castaic Lake, burning around 10,425 acres. The fire scorched the entire north and east sides of the lake's mountains down to the waterline.

It spread over the main launch ramp, moved into the lower lagoon, and destroyed all of the east side before continuing past the lake and being contained a



few miles beyond. Fortunately, no structures were lost, but park fences, signage, and safety railings along the roads were damaged or destroyed.

Lake Lifeguards played a crucial role in evacuating park visitors and boats from the water during the early stages of the fire. They also helped relocate equipment that could be moved to safe areas throughout the day.



Eaton Fire Response: Lake Lifeguards Assist with Family Support

In response to the Eaton Fire, which left many families without homes and schools, the LA County Department of Parks and



Recreation set up Care Camps to help affected children. Lake Lifeguards were assigned to assist with running the camps in nearby parks, particularly in the Altadena area. These camps, organized with help from Junior Lake Lifeguard Directors, provided a safe and enjoyable environment for children affected by the fire. Over the past three weeks, Lake Lifeguards worked long hours, taking on roles as camp counselors, assisting with first aid, and completing reports.

2024/2025 Lifeguard Exchange in New Zealand By Lola Swank



(L to R) Samantha Hall from Seal Beach, Jess Wanden-Hannay from Piha Surf Lifesaving Club, and Nolan Weisser of Newport Beach.

Samantha Hall of Seal Beach and Nolan Weisser of Newport Beach did an excellent job representing California on the 2025 California/New Zealand Lifeguard Exchange Program. They landed in Auckland the day after Christmas and were escorted to Sunset Beach where the club members took Sam and Nolan out for fishing and beautiful sunset views. Sam and Nolan then headed to United North Piha where they qualified for their bronze medallions allowing them to officially lifeguard as the volunteer lifeguards of New Zealand do.

Northern Region Surf Lifesaving treated Sam and Nolan so well that they arranged for them to have their very own lifeguard truck to take them up to the Far North Surf Lifesaving Club, Baylys Beach and then to Ruakaka Surf Lifesaving Club where they saw the annual Inflatable Rescue Boat Head to Head; there Sam and Nolan had the pleasure of witnessing their first ever IRB competition. Our exchange guards rounded off their Northland visit with Whangarei Heads and Waipu Cove where Sam joined the club president Rick Stolwerk in an ocean swim from Langs Beach to Waipu Cove (that's almost 4 kilometers of swimming!) hats off to Sam for showing off her amazing swim skills she learned at Seal Beach.

Sam and Nolan then headed to Mount Maunganui in the Eastern Region of the North Island to see one of the biggest surf lifesaving championships that the region has to offer: surf skis, four-person row boats, kneeboard rescues and surf swims were some of the events featured. Similar but slightly different to the regional events we host every summer here in California.

Sam and Nolan were also able to visit surf lifesaving clubs at Bethells Beach, Piha Beach, Karekare Beach, Raglan Beach, and Muriwai Beach. In total Sam and Nolan made contact with twelve different surf clubs, learning how the kiwi's lifeguard and sharing their own California lifeguard knowledge they've learned throughout their time at their home beaches.

The surf lifeguards at Surf Lifesaving Northern Region had endless praises to share on behalf of Sam and Nolan, and our exchange guards reciprocate that same sentiment in regard to their time abroad. California Surf Lifesaving Association was greatly represented this last season, and the Exchange Committee looks forward to hosting our incoming kiwi exchange guards this summer 2025.

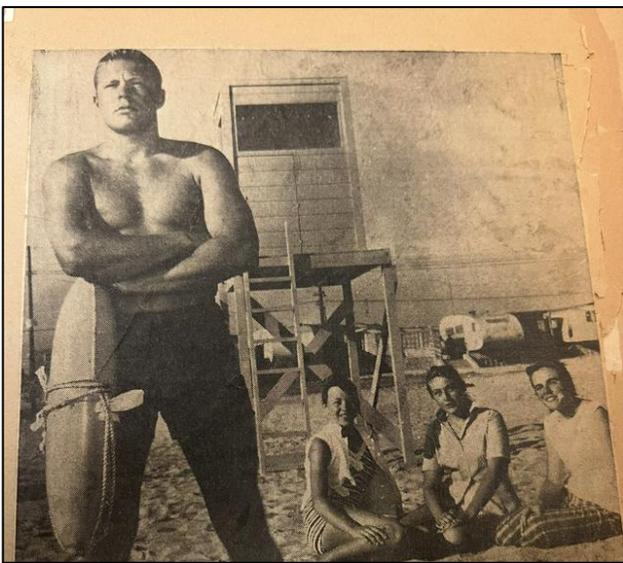


Nolan with his dad Kai Weiser who made the same trip to NZ nearly forty years ago

DragonSkin

HB Lifeguard Legend Douglas D'Arnall Remembered for 35 Years of Public Service

By Mike Bartlett and Max Bowman



Douglas D'Arnall, former Secretary General of World Life Saving, was a legend in the international lifesaving community and served the City of Huntington Beach as an ocean

lifeguard from 1956 until he retired as Assistant Lifeguard Chief in 1991. D'Arnall, a longtime resident of Huntington Beach, passed away March 2 at the age of eighty-seven from natural causes with his wife and family by his side at his home in Roebuck, South Carolina.

Born in Glendale, CA, D'Arnall's family moved to Costa Mesa where he later attended Orange Coast College from 1955-57. A natural athlete, D'Arnall loved baseball but the competition to make the pitching squad was fierce, so he joined the school's water polo and swim teams at the urging of a new friend, Max Bowman. In 1956, Bowman, who worked as an ocean lifeguard for Huntington Beach, convinced D'Arnall to try out for ocean lifeguard. D'Arnall made the cut in Huntington Beach and began his career in life-saving.



Doug Arnall and Max Boman

With a new-found love for the ocean and Huntington's pristine coastline, D'Arnall moved to Huntington Beach and worked three summers as an ocean lifeguard. He quickly adapted to the surf and many challenges of this dynamic beach environment known today as "Surf City, USA." Always a competitive athlete, D'Arnall excelled in bodysurfing often joining other guards with the surf was challenging. Mastering the surf, proved to be a valuable skill among guards. Although performing numerous rescues and preventative actions working towers, D'Arnall is credited for saving a man who was swept far offshore by a large rip current near the bluff area. With only swim fins and a flotation buoy called a torpedo can, D'Arnall swam several hundred yards offshore to reach the distressed swimmer. Using his torpedo can as flotation for the victim, D'Arnall swam the victim nearly 1/2 mile back to shore in adverse conditions. In those days, lifeguards did not have powered boats or skis for backup. The entire rescue took over 40 minutes to complete from start to finish and stands today as the most enduring rescue by any lifeguard in department to date.

Married in 1961, D'Arnall had three children and raised his family in Huntington Beach. In 1962, D'Arnall was promoted to lieutenant. As the city's population and beach visitation exploded in numbers, Lt. D'Arnall played a leadership role in the development of the city's lifeguard department. Under the control of then Chief Vincent Moorhouse who transformed the department, Lt. D'Arnall used his educational prowess to assist the Chief's goals. Lt. D'Arnall bought a typewriter, took it to work and began documenting various reports and cementing his written talents as a key administrator for the growing Lifeguard Department. Lt. D'Arnall is credited for writing the city's first Lifeguard Training Manual, General Orders, and Policies and Procedures Manual to advance the Lifeguard Department's mission and professionalism.

"Lt. D'Arnall was my training officer back in June of 1962. We had eight trainees, four of which would be first-time guards. The other four had worked in 1961, but there was no official training before 1962. Both he and Capt. Bowman were excellent instructors, setting the stage for future official training programs that included lifesaving techniques, tower work, first aid and physical training, including pier jumping, run-swim-runs and pier swims," recalled Bill Richardson, who later rose to the rank of Marine Safety Division Chief. "One incident stands out in my mind. It was late May 1963. I was working in Tower Zero on the pier and at about 8 AM, I spotted a fully clothed woman entering the water about 150 yards north of the pier. Lt. D'Arnall, the only other "guard" on duty that early in the morning, was in Headquarters doing his routine early morning paperwork. I called and advised him that it looked like the woman was possibly attempting suicide as she was entering the water in her street clothes and was swimming out through the surf. Lt. D'Arnall rolled Code III to the scene, immediately entered the water, and sprinted to the victim. catching her as she went underwater just outside of the surf line. He secured her and brought her back to shore safely. His watermanship and lifeguard skills, definitely saved that young woman's life."

In 1964, Lt. D'Arnall helped create the Huntington Beach Surf Lifesaving Association with Capt. Bowman. Together with Chief Moorhouse, they were the Founding Fathers with Lt. D'Arnall serving as the

chapter's first President. As a 501 c3 nonprofit, with a mission is to educate the public on beach safety to prevent drowning and advance the lifesaving profession, the association became the blueprint for creating the National Surf Lifesaving Association (known today as the United States Lifesaving Association). Historically significant, Chief Moorhouse, Capt. Bowman and Lt. D'Arnall were the original Charter Members for NSLSA along with Bob Burnside (Zuma), Dick Hazard (San Clemente), Don Rohrer (LA City) and Jim Richards (Santa Monica). All widely respected, lifesaving leaders in their perspective agencies.

Networking with other agencies yielded tremendous knowledge and advancement for the surf lifesaving profession by sharing knowledge and experiences. Developing standards as benchmarks to gain professionalism to better serve their communities in drowning prevention was one of D'Arnall's goals. He is credited for authoring one of the first ever lifeguard training manuals in marine safety made available through the lifesaving associations.

In 1964, Lt. D'Arnall was tasked with studying and analyzing the first ever Junor Lifeguard Program created in LA County. After months of researching, he drafted a similar model for Huntington Beach which was implemented that summer. Today, this premier youth educational program is vital to recruiting and training future ocean lifeguards and was at that time as well. Lt. D'Arnall's fingerprints in creating this program is part of his legacy and the city's success in preventing drowning and beach-related accidents.

In 1969, Lt. D'Arnall was promoted to captain, taking on more responsibility in managing the day-to-day operations as the Lifeguard Department which changed to the Department of Harbours and Beaches. Huntington Harbour was then developed with marinas, boat launch ramps, bayfront homes and beaches. The city tasked Chief Moorhouse as the Harbormaster, and the lifeguards implemented a 24-hour harbour patrol to provide protection to both Huntington Harbour and Sunset Beach communities. Capt. D'Arnall was instrumental in providing lifeguard training to both recurrent and permanent lifeguard staff.

"Capt. D'Arnall was a great leader," explained Richardson. "He led our crew by example even while handling almost all the clerical work, keeping track of our statistics, hours of work, emergency reports and so

forth. Later in our careers, he was more like a direct Supervisor, assigning various work schedules and making sure we were in line with Department policies and procedures. He taught us all the necessary skills to later become supervisors and managers in the Marine Safety Division. He was one of our key mentors in the early stages of our careers.”



In 1984, Capt. D’Arnall was promoted to Beach Services Manager (Assistant Lifeguard Chief) overseeing lifeguard/marine safety operations; parking and camping; beach maintenance

and equipment repair. He drafted the Department’s Annual Report showcasing beach rescue and medical aid statistics and coining the phrase “the area from the pier south to Beach Blvd. is arguably the busiest one mile stretch of beach in the world.” He also led the 1984 Junior Guard Exchange Team to New Zealand and acted as a host ambassador to many international lifesaving dignitaries who came to learn about Huntington’s lifeguard operations. Since Huntington Beach became the gold-standard for other agencies around the world to emulate, D’Arnall took on the role of Secretary General of World Life Saving along with Bowman who was the organization’s President. Although D’Arnall retired from the City in 1991, he continued serving the World Life Saving until 1993 when it merged into the International Lifesaving Federation.

In 1995, D’Arnall moved to North Carolina to spend time with his family and later re-married to his wife Judy in 2001. For the next twenty years, D’Arnall would connect with his lifesaving colleges while attending lifesaving conferences from time to time and

annual golf trips that coincided with lifesaving educational events. Bowman, his lifelong friend and colleague, remained in Huntington Beach and organized the Annual Doug



D’Arnall Golf Event for nearly 15 years in a row to entice the ever-competitive D’Arnall back to Huntington Beach.

Upon D’Arnall’s retirement, Capt. Richardson was ultimately the Marine Safety Division Chief the last of the “Old Guard” era. “I was fortunate enough to work in all phases of the Marine Safety service in-



cluding Recurrent Tower Guard, Permanent Lifeguard, Rescue Boat Operator, Marine Safety Sergeant, working as a relief supervisor in both the Lifeguard and Harbor Divisions. D’Arnall’s influence, mentorship and leadership contributed greatly to enabling me to have a career that spanned 32 years with the City,” said Richardson. “But more importantly, his leadership and example helped lay the groundwork for one of the most successful lifeguard



services in California.”

In January 2024, D’Arnall and his wife returned to Huntington Beach Lifeguard Headquarters (now the Fire Department Marine Safety Division) to complete research for his new book “Challenged”, which chronicles his experiences during the years of his tenure. Bowman and D’Arnall had the foresight to

create newspaper scrap books spanning decades and documenting the Lifeguard Department's legacy, which assisted him in writing his book and confirming facts. These stories are now officially part of a digitized archive at the County of Orange Hall of Records.

A key administrative figure helping to transform the beach patrol into a year-round, professional marine safety operation, D'Arnall memorialized Lifeguard Training Manuals and authored the first lifeguard training book in Marine Safety. As one of the first advocates of the Junior Lifeguard Program designed to educate our youth and recruit future ocean lifeguards, D'Arnall influenced hundreds if not thousands of lives spanning five decades.

A Charter Member in the local, regional, national, and World Life Saving Associations, D'Arnall served honorably as Secretary General of World Life Saving from 1988-1993. For his dedicated term, he was recognized as an Honorary Life Member in all four organizations. Conferred in 1994 a Grand Knight in the Order of Life Saving by the International Life Saving Federation (only three other Americans hold this honor), D'Arnall is well known in lifesaving circles around the globe from England to New Zealand as an "ambassador to world lifesaving." His leadership helped shape a profession that is respected for its heroism and commitment to public safety.

D'Arnall is survived by his wife, Judith Sawyer D'Arnall; sons Dennis and Darrell D'Arnall; daughter Dorynn Gallego; and eight grandchildren. His family, friends, and colleagues remember him as a devoted husband, father, and a towering figure in lifesaving history.

A celebration of Douglas D'Arnall's life will be announced at a later date. In lieu of flowers, the family requests donations to the Huntington Beach Surf Lifesaving Association, a nonprofit he helped establish to advance drowning prevention and public education (Venmo @HBSLSA). A Lifeguard Scholarship will be created in his name.

Author Notes:

Mike Bartlett is a Marine Safety Captain for Huntington Beach Fire Department and former Editor of the American Lifeguard Magazine.

Max Bowman is (retired) Director of Community Services and Lifeguard Chief for Huntington Beach, and former President of World Life Saving.

Bill Richardson is (retired) Marine Safety Division Chief and former President of United States Lifesaving Association.



Heroic Act recipient, Tyler Berry promoted to Captain.

By Lola Swank



Tyler started his lifeguard career in 2002 at 16 rising through the ranks from Sergeant in 2007 to Lieutenant in 2023, he had spent decades not just watching over the ocean, but truly understanding it—its dangers, its unpredictability, and the countless lives it could claim if not for those who stood vigilant. And now, in 2025,

as the new lifeguard captain, his legacy was undeniable.

Many knew of the time he jumped off the pier, pulling an unconscious woman from the depths. But those who had worked alongside him, those who had shared the long summers and harrowing rescues, knew there were countless other stories just as heroic.

For fifteen years, we worked side by side every Fourth of July when we patrolled the south beaches, finding an overwhelmed



stretch beach with no lifeguard coverage. As soon as we arrived, chaos erupted: swimmers struggling in the surf, frantic parents calling for help. Without hesitation, we leaped from the truck, diving into the water. Just as we pulled the last exhausted swimmer to shore, a woman ran up to us, her baby choking in her arms. In that critical moment, Tyler's composure never wavered. With swift, practiced movements, he cleared the obstruction, and the baby let out a cry—a sound that has never left my memory.

Then there was that Labor Day weekend, when Tyler, patrolling on the PWC, was called to the Tower 4 area where multiple rescues were underway. By the time he arrived, a young boy was slipping beneath the surface, his final breath escaping just as Tyler reached him. With the precision of a seasoned waterman, he scooped the boy onto the sled, bringing him back to shore.

Tyler has always been more than just a lifeguard; he is a leader, a protector, a friend, and a reminder of why we do what we do. He has never sought recognition, only the satisfaction of knowing that, because of his actions, another life has been saved. And as he steps into his new role as captain, I have no doubt that he will continue to lead with the same courage and unwavering dedication that has defined his career. Here's to Captain Tyler Berry—a lifeguard, a hero!



Lifeguard Minimum Wage By ADAM SANDLER

Public safety is currently being compromised in California as a result of the shortage of professional ocean and open water lifeguards. A shortage that can perhaps be cured by offering a decent minimum wage to applicants and employees who choose to make public safety a career.

That is the premise of proposed legislation being advocated by the California Surf Lifesaving Association to state legislators. Advocacy letters have recently been sent to key lawmakers who in the past supported issues facing professional ocean and open water lifeguards.

The legislation is aimed at establishing a minimum wage for professional ocean and open water lifeguards in California, a group facing major employment challenges. Inadequate compensation has led to an alarming decline in the number of qualified lifeguards, as many are forced to seek better-paying opportunities elsewhere.

The CSLSA believes that legislative action is needed to enhance the recruitment and retention of lifeguards, which will ensure continued public safety for both California residents and tourists.

"Our professional lifeguards face demanding conditions, including long hours, exposure to the elements and the responsibility of saving lives," said Gus Avila, President of the CSLSA. "Offering a competitive wage helps recognize the critical role of lifeguards. Adequate compensation boosts morale, reduces turnover, improves performance and overall public safety, which ultimately benefits the state's beachgoers."

The current pay for ocean and open water lifeguards is widely considered insufficient to attract and retain qualified individuals. As a result, many lifeguards leave the profession due to low wages, resulting in workforce shortages that can compromise public safety.

Ocean and open water lifeguards undergo extensive training and have high levels of responsibility and stress. Serious injury and/or death are inherent workplace risks. The low threshold for error suggests minor mistakes can lead to serious injury or death to the public and liability for the Lifeguard Agency and lifeguard.



The shortage portends major challenges: Beach visitation is on the rise. The number of swimmer rescues continues to soar. Medical emergencies are also increasing, and lifeguards are often the first responders providing critical care and preventing fatalities. As a result, the traditional lifeguard summer-

time workforce is no longer able to cope with emerging outdoor recreation trends: people are visiting the beach year-round, staying later in the day and seeking out new locations that are frequently unguarded. Lifeguard wages typically have not kept up with the State minimum wage or with market trends, as a result, undermining the capacity to attract and retain qualified employees to protect and safeguard California's beachgoers. Minimum wage in California can vary widely among agencies and typically ranges from \$14.00 to \$18.75 per hour. Disparities in pay for ocean and open water lifeguards can occur between City Aquatics, Parks and Recreation, Marine Safety,

and Fire Departments, the latter two often offering higher wages. Some agencies also offer bonuses for EMT certificates, or being bilingual, which can raise the starting wage. In any case, the current wages are far from commensurate with the level of risks, responsibilities and professionalism required of ocean and open water lifeguards. Conversely, as a result of recent legislation, fast food workers have a starting hourly minimum wage of \$20.00.

By establishing legislation that sets a minimum wage for ocean and open water lifeguards, the bill prioritizes the safety and well-being of California's residents and visitors by ensuring fair compensation for lifeguards that reflects the professional skills, training, risks, and responsibilities associated with the position.

Competitive lifeguard wages will also attract a broader pool of candidates, reduce turnover, and build a stable workforce that can address emerging challenges.

"To ensure the safety of California's beaches, the lifeguard community, alongside lawmakers and officials, must collaboratively address the critical recruitment and retention challenges," says Ryan Gates, CSLSA Legislation Committee member who conceived the idea and is spearheading the effort. "Legislative action to resolve pay disparities is essential for attracting and retaining qualified lifeguards. Strong public support provides a foundation, but proactive policy changes are needed to achieve lasting solutions."



A Quick Look at the
Ventura Surf Rescue Association and California State Lifeguard Association
 Host of the Spring 2025 CSLSA BOD Meeting

The California State Lifeguard Association (CSLA) is a 501(c)(4) nonprofit organization that seeks to promote beach and ocean safety awareness while maintaining professional open water lifesaving standards.

Affiliated Agencies: State of California, Channel Coast District

- **Creation:** 1952
- **Coastline Guarded:** 24 Miles
- **Permanent Lifeguards:** 7
- **Seasonal Lifeguards:** 100
- **Beach Attendance 2024:** 1,310,484*
- **Rescues:** 806
- **Junior Lifeguards:** 1100 (approx.)

(*Statewide statistics)

The Ventura State Rescue Association is a professional association for State Lifeguards working in the Ventura Sector of the Channel Coast District, which consists of the State Beaches in the Ventura Sector, the Ventura Port District, and the Ventura City beaches. **State Beaches** include Mandalay, McGrath, San Buenaventura, Carpinteria, and Emma Woods. **Ventura Port District Beaches** include Surfers Knoll and Harbor Cove. **Ventura City Beaches** include Ventura Pier to Surfer's Point and the stretch of beach from Marina Park to Camden Lane.

Chief lifeguard: Lt. James Bray
 SPPO Lifeguard Supervisor II
 Channel Coast District

James.Bray@parks.ca.gov

For Agency information:

https://www.parks.ca.gov/?page_id=685

For Association information:

VSRA805@gmail.com

CSLSA Contact: Jim Harmon

lgpdfam@aol.com

California Bears Compete in Super Surf Teams League

By ADAM SANDLER



L-R Back row: Charlie Black, Roman Higgins, Lukas Pohlman, Stephen Blaauw, Merrill Riley. **Front row:** Claire Kelly, Katelyn Nimsky, Holly Maine, Madalyn Price

A team of California Ocean Lifeguards returned to Australia to compete in the “Super Surf Teams League” surf carnival.



The California Surf Lifesaving Association team — collectively known as the California Bears — consisted of four men, four women and a coach.

The team was comprised of some of California’s most formidable surf racers: Holly Maine, Stephen Blaauw, Katelyn Nimsky and Lukas Pohlman of the

Los Angeles County Surf Lifesaving Association; Charlie Black of the Santa Barbara Lifeguard Association;

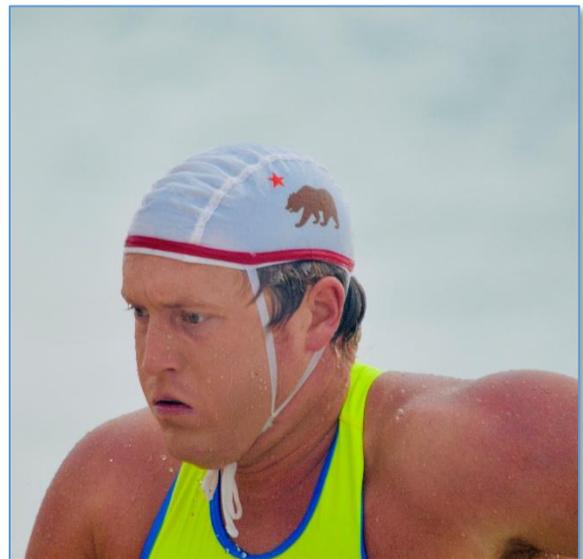


Claire Kelly

Madalyn Price of the Capitola Lifeguard Association; Claire Kelly of the Laguna Beach Lifeguard Association and Roman Higgins of the

California State Lifeguard Association. The team was coached by Merrill Riley of LACoSLSA.

The SSTL surf carnival was held on December 14 and 15, 2024 at Wanda Beach Surf Lifesaving Club in New



Stephen Blaauw

South Wales. It was in conjunction with Surf Lifesaving Australia’s Interstates Competition and the Shaw And Partners Iron Series. Round 1 of the popular Iron Series was held on the same days.

The SSTL event boasted a field of 16 clubs competing for top honors over 10 events which featured solo, mixed relay and team races. Individual races were held in the Beach Sprint and Beach Flags events, as well as Surf Race, Board Race and Surf Ski. There were six U17 teams as well.



Charlie Black

Two-person Mixed

Relays were contested in Beach Relay, Surf Relay, Board Relay and Ski Relay events, with an 8-person "Ocean M" Relay incorporating all ocean disciplines and concluding with a surf ski anchor leg.

Event organizers and other team coaches complimented the Bears on their overall performance and

how the team's presence was both a palpable and terrific addition to the SSTL competition.



considerable mettle against their Australian counterparts.

Laguna Beach's Kelly delivered several notable finishes in the swims including a 7th place solo surf swim finish, while LA's Maine demonstrated her board prowess both in solo and mixed events.

Capitola's Price (aka Munchie) and Santa Barbara's Black gave the Aussies a run for their money in Beach Flags and Beach Sprint. Price landed 5th place in Sprint and 7th place in Flags. Black scored a 10th place Flag finish.



Madalyn Price (white cap)

In the mixed

teams swim relay race LA's Blaauw teamed with Kelly and landed a 6th place finish, adding to the team's accomplishments for the series. The duo of Maine and Roman Higgins paddled to a solid Board Relay finish, while Nimsky had some sound ski finishes.

"Overall, the competition was great," said Blaauw, who noted that the event being two days instead of three "made it much more manageable for the Bears' to compete at their top level. Plus, Wanda Beach had great conditions that were perfect to test our skills."

"It was also nice that the officials and even some of the other team managers complimented the entire Bears' team on how much we have improved since competing in our first [SSTL] in January 2024. It felt good to have our hard work and training noticed," said Blaauw, who also served as the Men's Team Captain.

It was Blaauw's second trip to Australia, but Maine has been spending a lot of time down under training and competing.



Roman Higgins

“We were delighted to again be invited to such an exciting event and represent California internationally,” said Maine, who served as the Team Captain for the women. “We had some very solid races and improved our results overall from last time.”

Prior to the two-days of competing, the California Bears members also participated in a Nippers clinic with many of the Australian superstar surf racers from the Iron Series.



Nippers Clinic

“We were lucky to join some of the Iron Series athletes in hosting a **Nippers** clinic before the racing began,” recalled Maine who said she was inspired by the event. “There is nothing like the excitement and eagerness of children in sports to re-ignite that flame inside of yourself and remind you of how far you’ve come in the sport.”

Following the clinic, the Bears team members posed for photos, signed autographs and handed out swag to the eager kids.

Bears coach Riley proudly noted that the team “held their own competing against some of the top surf lifesaving athletes in the world and also gained a lot of experience.”

Riley also enlisted the help of Australian surf lifesaving sport legend Greg Allum (AM), an ILS Competition Director and Grand Knight, and an SLSA and Cronulla SLSC Life Member.

Allum is also a Life Member at Wanda SLSC, where the SSTL event was held. Riley and Allum first met at the 2023 International Surf Rescue Challenge held in South Padre Island, Texas.

“Greg was absolutely terrific,” recalled Riley. “He hooked the team up with gear and was a great resource, which really helped us focus on the racing.”

Maine is looking forward to the next Australian surf carnival.



Holly Maine

“From tough competition, inspiring (and being inspired by) the youth, fostering life-long friendships and creating unforgettable memories, the opportunity to compete in Australia and events like the SSTL is life-changing,” said Maine. “Thank you, Surf Lifesaving Australia, the California Surf Lifesaving Association, and everyone else who made this trip possible.”

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