

Cal-Surf News

Volume 6 Number 2

Summer 1999



Clint Dyal, Oceanside, soloing a little too close to the rocks in New Zealand



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President's Report

Don't Let Your Guard Down

By Bill Richardson,
Huntington Beach

With the onset of summer we face the task of increased crowds, warm weather and continuing financial limitations. While we have always experienced these conditions, the success rate of open water lifeguards across the nation, but particularly in the southwest, has been phenomenal. As you may have heard, the odds of a drowning occurring on

such beaches is about 1 in 14 million.

The Association has experienced a great success this past year in assisting the National Park Service in the San Francisco area. Last year the summer started off with several drownings at Ocean Beach, just outside of San Francisco. Through the concentrated news media blitz brought on by Chris Brewster, Bob Burnside of CSLSA and Francis Smith and Dr. Bernard Nietschman of Cal Berkeley, the Park Service accepted an offer from the USLA to provide consulting services to identify a means of providing lifeguards to help curtail the problem.

Rich Gould (Santa Cruz), Carl Drake (Cal State Parks) and Bob Fennel (Pacific Northwest Region) were assigned as a team representing USLA to work with the Park Service. I am happy to report that Ocean Beach will provide lifeguard services this summer, with a budget of just over \$100,000, for the primarily seasonal operation.

Many thanks go out to the team and the Park Service for their willingness to work out the details and for putting lifeguards back on the beach.

This is one of the success stories of how our association can work for the safety of the public we serve. It's not all competition, parties, or meetings. It's about people and how we can have an impact through education of beach patrons, to swim near a lifeguard; education of government to put lifeguards where people swim; and finally to educate lifeguards and to continually strive to improve lifeguarding through improving standards and provision of educational materials.

I want to thank the Executive Board for their work this past two years. These gentlemen and ladies have represented CSLSA extremely well on the national level. In October at the biannual meeting of the Board of Directors to be held in Mission Viejo, we will elect new officers who will take office in the beginning of the new millennium. If you or someone you know is interested in running for an office, please contact Mike Beuerlein in Huntington Beach.

We all can make a difference, but only if we participate. Have a great summer, and DON'T LET YOUR GUARD DOWN!

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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.

Agency Profile

CA State Parks - California State Lifeguards

By Ken Kramer, CA State Parks

With 267 park units, over 6,000 employees, and nearly 80-million visitors per year, California State Parks is the second largest park system in the world (second only to the US National Park Service). It is also the third largest state law enforcement agency, employing over 700, fully sworn, peace officer rangers and lifeguards. Park units are divided into three divisions, southern, northern, and Off Highway Vehicles, and are classified as state parks, state beaches, state recreation areas, historic parks, or recreational vehicle areas.

California State Parks operates one of the largest professional lifeguard services in the world, with more than 600 seasonal lifeguards, and 65 full time lifeguard/peace officers. The service spans more than 600 miles of diverse coastline from the Sonoma Coast to the Mexican border, and inland waterways from Folsom and Clear Lake, to Lake Perris and Silverwood. In fact, sixty-one percent of state park units offer some form of aquatic recreation. State lifeguards annually perform more than 12,000 swimmer rescues, save millions of dollars of boater property, perform 6,000 medical aides, swift water and flood rescues, technical cliff rescues, and the full range of law enforcement duties. Public education is a primary component of the state park aquatic safety program, with more than 6,000 kids participating in Junior Lifeguard classes each year. State lifeguards also provide community outreach education such as State Park Police Activities League, and local water safety programs.



Paul Swain diving off Surfwatch of Huntington State with Paul Milosch operating the vessel.

History - The first lifeguard service on California State Beaches was provided in 1938 at Doheny and San Clemente by contract to the county of Orange. In 1950, Robert Isenor, a former Newport Beach city lifeguard, was hired at Huntington State Beach as the first state park lifeguard and was charged with developing a program that included ten lifeguards, and one patrol jeep. 27 swimmer rescues were performed that first year, with a beach attendance of 211,000. In 1954, Isenor became the first state lifeguard peace officer, and was responsible for developing lifeguard services throughout California State Parks. Other notable milestones include 1958, when the first state lifeguard SCUBA diver was sanctioned, 1962, when lifeguard testing and training was formalized, and 1964, when the first "SurfWatch" ocean rescue vessel was launched and the California State Lifeguard Association was formed.

The Hiring Process - All state park lifeguards are trained to United States Lifesaving Association (USLA) standards, and many develop advanced skills and certifications in a variety of public safety disciplines. Entry level seasonal employees compete in a hiring process that includes physical testing, oral interviews, a challenging 100-hour ocean or lake rookie school, and continuous on-the-job training. Additionally, full-time employees compete in a civil service hiring process for selection to the entry-level position of Lifeguard Cadet. Lifeguard Cadets must pass a 26 week, 980 hour P.O.S.T. (Peace Officer Standards and Training) certified police academy and park operations program, known as Basic Visitor Services Training, before being assigned to a specific beach or park. After successful completion of a 16-week field officer training program, a one-year probationary period, and a two-

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Cal Surf News

California State Parks

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year initial assignment, full time lifeguards are eligible to transfer throughout the state to available lifeguard or ranger positions.

Seasonal lifeguards - Representing more than ninety-percent of the workforce, seasonal lifeguards are the "backbone" of the aquatic safety operations. Most work during the high use summer season, and are limited to a maximum of 1,500 hours per year. Many of the veteran seasonals are professionals from careers such as teaching, the medical profession, the financial community, attorneys, and other respected vocations. Some return each year while working themselves through school, or to save money for adventurous, world travels. Experienced seasonal lifeguards perform assignments such as vehicle and vessel patrol, dispatching, training instructor, junior lifeguard instructor, and seasonal supervisor.

Lifeguard/Peace Officers - While aquatic safety is the primary function and focus of ALL state lifeguards, additional duties are required, depending upon area assignment and

operational needs that include law enforcement, public education, and resource management and protection.

California State Parks is one of the only agencies in the country to utilize lifeguards with full peace officer authority. The dual role of lifeguard and peace officer provides an effective and cost efficient means of staffing aquatic recreation areas requiring both a law enforcement and aquatic safety presence. Full-time state lifeguards are fully sworn, meaning they have full police powers on or off duty, 24 hours a day, throughout the state. They are highly trained in use of force issues, arrest and control procedures, and criminal law. While Lifeguard/Peace Officers are occasionally required to respond outside of state parks, they are primarily responsible for state park law enforcement services such as crime prevention, accident and crime scene investigation, traffic law and DUI enforcement, park rules and regulation enforcement, and enforcement of laws through education, warning, citations and arrests. Advanced law enforcement skills include gang awareness,



Chip Bockman, six years as a State Lifeguard/Peace officer posing in front of Huntington Beach State Headquarters.

boating law enforcement, K-9 handler, traffic accident investigator, drug recognition, firearms and tactics, riot and crowd control, chemical agents, specialty impact munitions, and S.W.A.T. Underneath the uniform, badge, body armor and gun belt, state park Lifeguard/Peace Officers wear red trunks, ready for any call for service.

Equipment Resources - Because of the varied nature of patrol areas, state lifeguards utilize an array of equipment and services to support their public safety mission. Patrol vehicles include bicycles, trucks, sport utility vehicles, and all-terrain vehicles. Vessels are used extensively and include four "SurfWatch" ocean rescue boats, personal watercraft, inflatable and rigid hull rescue boats, and a fleet of inland water patrol craft. A 50-person SCUBA dive team provides statewide response

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Bill Pfeifer arresting a patron at Huntington State while Joe Vialouos looks on.

Shop Talk

California State Parks

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capability to rescue / search and recovery, as well as underwater parks planning, interpretation and maintenance of equipment and facilities.

Whether guarding lives in the water or on land, the California State Lifeguards are proud to offer unique skills and expertise to the lifesaving profession. We extend an open invitation to visit our operations, and send our best wishes for many safe and enjoyable visits to your State Parks. For more information about the California State Lifeguards, please write to California State Lifeguard Association, PO Box 5091, Huntington Beach, CA 92651-5091, or visit our website at lifeguard-csla.org.

This Isn't Baywatch.. This is Real Life!

By Eric Sandy, Del Mar

"Get out of here, it's my turn!" shouted the female voice. Hearing this, Del Mar's male lifeguards needed no more convincing, there was no mistaking the tone or the message.

It was the summer of 1971 and Joyce Hoffman, probably the first ocean lifeguard in California, was firmly asserting her rights to privacy. This was long before any Affirmative Action programs, and Joyce had won her position fair and square. A world class surfer, she was a very strong ocean swimmer, smart, tenacious and bold. She had to be to survive as a pioneer in a virtually all male occupation.

Since that time, much has changed. Now, female ocean guards are found in most agencies. And, like Joyce, they earn their way into the jobs. At least one other difference can be seen during the annual rechecks for

recurrent guards. When Joyce did well in the run-swim-run, everybody was surprised. These days the women might be winning the whole physical test. And the locker room battle? It's not uncommon for female guards to have their own facilities.

Although most definitely equal, the female ocean lifeguard is still different - often in some very interesting ways. One notable specialty is dealing with lost children. Very often, a young child will be much more willing to talk to a female lifeguard. It's the "Mom thing."

Other examples surely abound and we welcome contributions to the general topics; "How is lifeguarding different for females?" or things I like about lifeguarding." Jenn Ross, one of Del Mar's finest, offers a starter list.

1. Saving a Life! Women bring us all into the world, lets keep people alive.

2. Observing beach fashion faux-pas - spandex is a privilege, not a right!

3. Physical exercise everyday whether you want it or need it or not.... See that dog WAYYYY down there?

4. Getting paid to see the sunset every night.

5. Having an office with a spectacular view, without having to brown-nose!

6. Meeting nice people from all over the world.

7. "Stupid Questions" like "Is that China?" No, that's Catalina!

8. Getting asked if you're Pamela (or Jasmine or Karmen) from Baywatch.

9. Lifeguard competitions with equal medal divisions.

10. Camraderie - knowing your backup is there when you need them.



Scott Bowen, 5-year seasonal State Lifeguard, keeping an eye on his area.

Balloon Down

By Eric Sandy, Del Mar

The hot air balloon, with twelve people in the basket, was down in the ocean. It was dark. The air was cold, the water was frigid. The light was suddenly surreal. From the propane firing into the balloon's rainbow colored envelope came an eerie glow that illuminated the frightened faces. Hovering above, the probing lights from the Sheriff's helicopter added more shadows and sparkles in the ocean spray whipped up by the prop wash. The whole scene, the entire two-day event could not have been more extraordinary if Baywatch writers had dreamed it. But this wasn't just another episode of fantasy lifeguarding - this was very real, life threatening real.

It had all started innocently enough. At dusk, almost every day, hot air balloons travel over Del Mar from inland valleys. Their normal flight path takes them to empty fields for easy landings. Occasionally, balloons have ventured near the beach, but always managed to set down safely. On this day, a very unusual wind pattern began blowing the balloons out over the beach towards the ocean. Two managed to land before the water but the third was forced to drop a few hundred yards outside the surf line. This was when a multiple agency rescue operation began that saved all twelve people from the balloon.

By morning, the adrenaline had dissipated and a clear review of the rescue offered several lessons. Training, staffing, use of equipment, teamwork, communication, leadership, courage - all the elements of a successful rescue - were highlighted as the various

agencies debriefed. But first, the aftermath would present even more twists to the already bizarre story.

That wayward balloon was still out there in the ocean. By morning it had drifted over a mile to the south and was bobbing in the surf a few hundred yards off the Del Mar beach. The owners had intended to send a boat to retrieve both the basket and the envelope. But, a competitor had other ideas. Chartering a boat from San Diego, he seemed intent on snagging the balloon first to claim salvage rights. With Del Mar Lifeguards in the middle of the communication struggle, the radios and telephones crackled. The balloon owner, the competitor's boat, the Coast Guard, the San Diego County Sheriff's office, San Diego Police, San Diego Lifeguards and Solana Beach Lifeguards all exchanged information. Quite often the conversations were heated, veiled threats emerged, maritime law was quoted. Sensing legal trouble and lacking proper equipment, the salvage boat abandoned the job.

Winds, tide and wave action quickly swept the very expensive basket onto the beach at the south end of Del Mar. City crews then wrestled it onto a loader and transported it up to the parking lot at Lifeguard HQ. There the grateful owner basked in the TV lights, thanking everyone involved. Even the balloon's champagne, normally part of the landing celebration, had been saved, but all that bouncing around rendered the bubble useless.

The lessons? Training was certainly a key to the success of this rescue. Part of the sizzling irony was that Mark Rathsam, the boat operator, was freshly trained. In fact, he had just gotten off the flight from New Zealand where, a few days before, he had finished advanced training in Inflatable Rescue Boat (IRB) operation. After getting bounced around in serious Tasman Sea breakers, the 3 to 5 foot surf off Del Mar was not a big deal. Mark handled the rescue boat with great skill despite the prop chop from the helicopter, the distraction of the balloon and the

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Del Mar Lifeguards used an Inflatable Rescue Boat to transport the victims of the incident back to shore. Photo by Tom Keck.

Balloon Down

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huge responsibility of twelve very cold, scared passengers. He couldn't have asked for a better chance to put his new skills to use and the rescue crew was most fortunate to have him. The value of cross-trained personnel became apparent in the work of Adam Chase. Although actually on duty as an enforcement officer at the time, Adam is also an experienced lifeguard and responded accordingly.

Adequate staffing was another important part of the balloon rescue. During the off-season, Del Mar, like many small agencies, has only a basic crew on full-time duty. The lifeguard lieutenant, sergeant and permanent lifeguard I are the primary response team. However, knowing that having extra help available is always important, Del Mar keeps a long call list of part-timers. These personnel often live within a few minutes of the beach and can quickly be mobilized when needed. This was the case on balloon day. The boat operator Mark, and lifeguard Jenn Ross both lived nearby and responded within minutes. Having these guards on the payroll year-round is a win-win. For the guards it's an opportunity to keep their skills current, and for the City its a tremendous safety net, clearly cost effective.

Having the proper equipment was also a vital element in the success of this operation. The IRB proved again to be extremely versatile. Easy and quick to launch, the boat was at the scene within minutes. Operating smoothly both through the surf line and in open water, it was user friendly. It was a stable platform for safe transfer of the victims from the balloon to the beach,

What it could not do was tow the huge balloon. For a moment, it seemed as if the balloon captain was ready to land his craft on the bow of the IRB as if it were some rubber version of the Kitty Hawk. But lifeguard Lt. Pat Vergne waved off the landing attempt, opting for ferry duty instead.

Communication, always at the core of emergency work, was also performed with great skill and efficiency during the balloon rescue. The City has recently upgraded its radios to the 800

operator Rathsam was quiet and strong, setting the example. Lifeguard Ross was confident and reassuring, guiding the shivering victims the last few yards from the surfline to the safety of the beach. Adam Chase, instrumental in first spotting the troubled balloon, gave direction and cohesion on the beach to the various rescue agencies. Pat Vergne commanded the water operation with a touch of charisma and bravado. In another twist to this strange story, Pat's wetsuit had gone to the shop for repair,

"No one could ever have imagined a more complex, exciting, thorough training situation than the balloon rescue. All possible situations occurred and, some highly improbable turns spiced the challenge."

mghz system. Having this flexible breadth, which enabled many different agencies to respond and coordinate, was a great improvement over previous efforts. Hand-held portables, both on the beach and in the IRB, netted with the Sheriff's helicopter, firefighters, paramedics and other rescue units. The transfer of information wasn't always completely seamless, but the overall performance was outstanding. Lessons learned during this operation will be integrated into the emergency protocols to improve future efforts.

Leadership and courage, without it we are lost. During the balloon rescue, there were many instances of excellent leadership of various types. Boat

that afternoon! Disregarding the 55 degree water, Pat stayed with the balloon until all passengers had been safely taken to the beach. Later on, he was shivering as much from the cold as from the excitement. "That was a good one!" Pat exclaimed. Firefighters, Coast Guards, Paramedics and many others also showed fine leadership, courage and teamwork.

A few months ago, the City of Del Mar conducted one of its periodic safety drills with an earthquake scenario based at the nearby state fairgrounds. Afterwards, some of the lifeguards suggested that a beach related incident be the basis for the next training session. No one
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Human Interest

Lifeguard Legend Mike Neil Still Surfing and Lifeguarding

By Michael Crawford, Coronado

A lone figure stands at the head of the beach, longboard in hand. He scans the stretch of ocean before him, by the light of the newly risen sun. First looking for any hazards or weak swimmers, then hoping to find a good left-hander. He knows this stretch of beach like it was his front lawn. He's been surfing this break, called the Pit, for over 40 years. As he paddles out through the surf, he recognizes the crew of old-timers who have been coming here since they were kids, alongside a few young faces of the next generation. He drops in on a head-high set, with a smile on his face, and rides the line until it closes out. A few hours later, he returns to the surf, but this time he carries a rescue tube and a pair of fins. A little girl with a Boogie board has drifted dangerously close to the rock jetty. He pulls her to safety and returns to his lifeguard truck. With a subtle wink and a thumbs-up, he drives off to continue his patrol of the beach. Not bad for a man about to turn 60 years old.

Captain Mike Neil has been lifeguarding since 1959, when he worked for the Silver Strand State Beach in San Diego. There he worked under Captain Jack Otis, who was an incredible influence on his life. Captain Otis, with a doctorate from UCLA, taught elementary school in the winter and saved lives in the summer. In 1962, Neil left the State park and came to work in Coronado, San Diego. Three years later, he was promoted to lifeguard captain. Along this same time period, he received bachelor's degrees from San Diego State University, with a double major in English and Industrial Arts, as

well as his teaching credential. He has been teaching high school ever since.

Teaching and lifeguarding have gone hand-in-hand for Captain Neil. In 1969, while teaching drafting, he and a student designed plans for a three story lifeguard tower, which is still used as the main tower at Coronado beach today. Mike has always been good with his hands. He has built exhaust systems for motorcycles, a gas tank for an airplane, and helped build Neril's Auto Shop, which is still owned by his cousin.

teller. He has integrity and wisdom that only come from seeing the world firsthand. His sense of adventure is amazing. He and two friends once hitchhiked along Route 66, then on to Montreal, to find a ride on a merchant ship to go to Europe for a month. He had no plans, no reservations. He left on a whim with only \$900 to his name. He spends one week every summer in Scorpion Bay, and every Thanksgiving at Punta San Jose, two incredibly beautiful surf spots in Baja, California. He



Captain Mike Neil always enjoys the thrills of Mother Nature

He is an expert on outboard motors and still today maintains the IRB used by the Coronado Lifeguards. He gets his mechanical prowess from his father, Jess, who worked as a handyman before becoming Assistant Chief for the Coronado Fire Department.

Captain Neil wears many hats in his life. He is a lifeguard, teacher, athlete, poet, philosopher, husband and father, a good friend, and a great story-

has a way about him and an ease in the way he speaks, a charismatic glow that makes him a joy to be around. He has the ability to make you laugh for hours, and make you cry in seconds with the sincerity of his words. Above all else, he takes pride in whatever he is doing and enjoys himself while doing it.

Mike Neil has been a pioneer in the world of lifesaving on the Califor-
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Cheers!

California-New Zealand
Lifeguard Exchange
By Clint Dyal, Oceanside

"Cheers!" This standard New Zealand greeting was the first thing we heard as we experienced the opportunity of a lifetime. Touring New Zealand's North Island and living on the beach in surf clubs was something we will never forget.

David Jenkins (S.D. State Parks) and myself were fortunate enough to be selected to represent the CSLSA in this year's California-New Zealand Lifeguard Exchange. The exchange lasted from December 28th to February 10. It was a fun and exciting six weeks. I arrived at six in the morning on the 30th of December, and was driven straight to Piha Beach where Dave, who arrived on the 29th, and I were taken up in the West Pac Rescue Helicopter for a quick tour. After a steep power turn, the helicopter hovered four meters above the water. Following a short pause, the crew chief looked at us and said, "Welcome to New Zealand. Now get out!" Dave and I then jumped out of the helicopter into the nice, cool water of the Tasman Sea. I had been in New Zealand under an hour and was already having the time of my life. From then on the trip seemed to get better and better.

We visited twelve surf clubs out of the sixteen in the Northern Lifeguard Services. Since we are both avid surfers, we picked the next club we were to visit by the size of the surf there at the time. We were able to do anything we wanted. We repelled through a waterfall with Danny and Damo in Muriwai, (Continued on p. 10)



1998/99 New Zealand Lifeguard Exchange Delegates David Jenkins, Encinitas, (left) and Clint Dyal, Oceanside, taken from Lion's Rock at Piha.

A Memorable Trip to New Zealand

By David Jenkins, Encinitas

Well, New Zealand proved to be all that was expected and more for me and Clint this past winter. The trip was a great learning experience for both of us, providing ample amounts of first aids and serious rescues to last us a while. The water temperature was around 68 degrees and the waves were powerful, big, perfect and uncrowded! Some highlights include a Med-Cal helicopter jump, cliff rescue work - repelling

through a waterfall, both of us completing our Inflatable Rescue Boat (IRB) certification courses, and, of course, thoroughly studying the New Zealand Lifeguard Procedures. We also earned the "Surf Lifeguard" Award, which certifies both of us to be lifeguards on New Zealand's beautiful beaches. We would like to thank all of the organizers and contributors for making this exchange a success!



The lifeguard tower at United (North Piha) with a view of Lion Rock and the "nun."

Medal of Valor Awarded to Pat Quigley, Laguna Beach

By Steve Long,
CA State Parks

On behalf of the USLA, CSLSA will present the Medal of Valor to Laguna Beach Lifeguard Patrick Quigley for a multiple victim rescue performed on May 10, 1998 at Diver's Cove, Laguna Beach. Quigley entered a small rocky channel known as "Giggle Crack: in large surf conditions, rescuing three victims, a child and two adults. Quigley and victims were submerged for a multiple wave hold down and battered re-

peatedly against the rocks. Despite Quigley's urgent need for air, he refused to lose his grip on the ankle of the submerged child until several waves had passed and he was able to surface with the victim.

Of particular significance, Patrick Quigley was awarded a Medal of Valor in 1998 for his participation in multiple rescues performed in extreme El Nino mudslide conditions on February 23rd, 1998. Quigley is the first multiple recipient of the USLA Medal of Valor.

Committee continues to refine the Medal of Valor medallion and anticipates presenting the finished product to the USLA Board later this spring.

(See photo on p. 11)

Still Guarding....

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nia coast. His staff was among the first ever to require the use of swim fins on rescues. His team also was using Inflatable Rescue Boats (IRB's) for surf rescues long before it became common practice. His positive influence on fellow lifeguards is easily seen. Guards that have worked under Captain Neil are currently proving themselves to be incredibly successful in other lines of work. Teachers, principals, Navy SEALs, Police Officers, members of the Peace Corps, paramedics, doctors... the list goes on and on. Many would say that he was a major influence in their lives. He stresses hard work, and leads by example and suggestion rather than barking orders in a militaristic manner. He gets results because his team doesn't want to disappoint him. He's more like a father figure than a boss. The year 2000 will be a special year for Captain Mike Neil. This will mark the sixth decade in which he has worked as an active lifeguard. He still drives the beach, and still

makes rescues. He sits in the waterside towers, and takes the IRB out on days with big surf. He still appreciates the beauty of the beach and the power of the ocean. He stands apart from the average, desk-riding supervisor on the beach. He currently teaches sophomore and AP English for high school students. You can still catch him paddling out at Outlet, Dead Larry's, the Pit, or the Shipwreck, and on really good days, you'll find him surfing the boat at the Mystery Break. Captain Neil once said, "It takes a couple of years to figure out your place in lifeguarding... after making some good rescues, where you really save lives... to know if it's in your blood. You get to the point where you know what has to be done to bring about the most good, and I became Captain to do that. It's the same for teaching, and doing both was the best."

Mike Neil's veins are full of the stuff that lifeguards are made of. He is one of this world's true heroes.

CA-New Zealand Exchange

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golfed with Bart and Jago, took Shane's six meter outboard for a spin, literally, in Auckland Bay, all the climbing and cliff diving we wanted and "heaps" of extra-curricular activities. Everyday we were excited about what was in store for us.

The trip was a lifeguard exchange and we guarded almost every day. We had about six or seven tube rescues each. Dave got his picture in the paper for rescuing some news reporter while I was down the beach doing rescue breathing on some guy who chose to swim outside the patrolled area. Like I said, every day was exciting.

The New Zealanders have "pro guards," who are paid guards, Monday through Friday, and volunteers who work the weekends, so we got to meet a wide variety of people. The minimum age for being a lifeguard, paid or volunteer, is fourteen. Every year in the fall they have the "Bronze," the tryout for the season. The guards are then selected and put at the various clubs for whole or part of the season. It is similar to the California State system. Sixteen beaches under the control of one body.

Dave and I had a great time and would like to thank all the people involved on both sides of the exchange. The exchange is about lifeguarding, but what you are really doing is going over and meeting and spending time with people like yourself. Ocean loving people who enjoy life and would give everything to help others. We had a great time and made some lifelong friendships. If you are over twenty one years old, have guarded over three seasons, and would like to be among the first to see the sun rise in the year 2000, contact your association president of hit the web site at www.cslsa.org.

COMPETITION NEWS

By Rob McGowan, L.A. County

By the time you read this article, the 1999 California Surf Lifesaving Championships, the CSLSA Regionals, held on the north side of the Huntington Beach pier, will be over. We will either be on our way, or already back from the USLA National Lifeguard Championships in Cape May, NJ, August 5, 6 and 7. The National Championship is on the line in Cape May and I know the Monmouth County Chapter would love to knock Los Angeles County off the top spot! Cape May always puts on a good event, and with backing from Foster's, Casio G-shock, Pepsi and others, this last Nationals of the millenium should be great. More information and a downloadable entry form are available on the Cape May web site, that can be linked to from www.usla.org.

In the year 2000, the Nationals return to the West Coast at San Diego's Crystal Pier. I was in San Diego last week and took the opportunity to check out the venue. It looked great! Crystal Pier is in Pacific Beach and is more centrally located than the 1997 site at South Mission Beach. Make your plans to attend now. You may even be able to book one of the motel rooms on the pier if they are not all gone already. They are a bit pricey, but you can see the competition right from the comfort of your room.

We are still looking for a host for the 2000 CSLSA Regionals. Ideally, we would like the same venue for Junior Guards and Lifeguards on back to back dates. If we stick with the Thursday & Friday format, we would be looking at July 13 and 14 or July 20 and 21. If your chapter or agency has any interest at all, please contact me by e-mail at RMcGowan_LASurfguard@prodigy.net, or you can call me at (310) 939-7207.

Also coming in the year 2000 is Rescue 2000 in Sydney, Australia on March 23 through April 2. With the beach events at Manly, it promises to be the biggest lifesaving event yet. I also heard that the pool events will be the last competition

held in the Olympic pool in Sydney prior to the Olympics. Check out the web site for Rescue 2000 at www.surflifesaving.com.au/rescue2000. Please spread the word that the USLA team will be selected based on the results of the 1999 Nationals in Cape May, and will consist of a maximum of six men and six women competitors. In addition to the World National Teams Championship, the World Inter Club, World Masters, and three World boat Championships will be contested. Make your plans early if you want to attend what should be the greatest show to date in World Lifesaving competition.

Two rule new changes will be in place for this summer's competitions. The first will add a one-lap surfboat race for the women and the other will change the board and ski legs of the Ironman/Ironwoman to a "M" shaped course. One other rule change was adopted that corrected the rescue board weight to 16.72 pounds in the rulebook. The updated USLA National Lifeguard Championships Competition Rules can be downloaded from the USLA web site.

At the Spring USLA Meeting in Santa Rosa, more rule changes were proposed that would take effect for the 2000 season if they are approved at the USLA Fall Meeting. These proposals include adding Women's Masters (ages 40 and up) events for all events in which Women currently compete, adding a "Singles Surfboat Race" of one lap, adding a "Mixed Doubles Surfboat Race" of one lap, changing the Women's age groups to be the same as those in the Men's divisions, deleting the "USLA Chapters and Beanie Colors" section from the rulebook, and elimination of the "Host Event." If you have any opinions on any of these proposals, and want to have your voice heard, please join us for the CSLSA Fall Meeting, October 14 and 15, in Mission Viejo. Until then, have safe summer, and I'll see you on the starting line.

Balloon Down

(Continued from p. 6)

could ever have imagined a more complex, exciting, thorough training situation than the balloon rescue. All possible situations occurred and, some highly improbable turns spiced the challenge.

In a fitting finale to this successful rescue story, the Del Mar City Council gave public commendations to all those involved.



From left to right: Steve Long, Chief Mark Klosterman, Patrick Quigley, and CSLSA President Bill Richardson after presenting the Medal of Valor to Quigley.

Penhall

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