

Cal-Surf News

Volume 2 Number 1

Summer 1992



More From Moore... A Word From the President

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Two Leaders in Lifesaving Die; Issue Dedicated in their Memory

By Bill Richardson, Mike Bartlett and John Everhart

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In Memory of Michael Knight

(March 23, 1964 - September 16, 1991)

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August of 1987. His dedication to lifesaving and public service are emphasized not only by the job he did for the City of San Diego, but also for the energy and time he spent giving public safety talks, organizing competitions, and promoting lifeguarding exchanges. Michael was very active in both the USLA and CSLSA and was the Vice President of the San Diego Lifeguard Association. He was well known both locally and internationally, having travelled through both Australia and New Zealand visiting lifeguard clubs and exchanging ideas.

“Knight was a highly-trained, dedicated and respected waterman,” said his colleagues.

In August of 1991, after a competitive selection process, Knight was appointed to the nine member San Diego River Rescue Team. In order to prepare himself for this opportunity, Michael had recently been certified by RESCUE 3 as a Swiftwater Technician I and II after completing in-depth training in Colorado. On September 16, 1991, the team was training on a portion of the North Fork of the Payette River in Idaho. At approximately 4:15 pm, while on a rescue board and in full rescue gear, Knight was observed by his teammates being pulled into an underwater strainer where a portion of the river dropped several feet through large boulders. Knight became lodged underwater with the full force of the river pressing against him. The River Rescue team made extensive efforts to rescue him, but were unable to do so by nightfall. The next day, after nearly six hours of moving huge boulders and partially diverting the river flow, the team was able to recover his body.

Knight was a highly trained professional lifeguard and was considered a strong waterman by his peers. He will be remembered by those who knew him for his easy going attitude, huge smile, and genuine friendliness. He will remain in our hearts and souls as we continue to guard the beaches that he so dearly loved.

Funeral Services were held at Mission Beach, San Diego, on September 20, 1991. Nearly 50 lifeguard vehicles from numerous agencies processioned along the

beach with lights flashing. Rescue vessels from up and down the coast, dorys, paddlers, and swimmers were present to witness the sprinkling of his ashes into the Pacific Ocean.

Michael Knight is survived by his fiance at the time of his death, Leilla, and his daughter, Jayda Michael Knight, who was born eight months after he died. The CSLSA sends its's condolences and support to Knight's family, friends, and to the City of San Diego who mourns his death.



Circa 1991: Michael Knight, respected by his colleagues as a highly-trained, dedicated and respected waterman, will be remembered for his achievements.

Lifeguarding: The Sport, The Profession, The Hazards

By Peter G. Wernicki M.D.
and John Glorioso

*This article is continued from the
previous issue of the 'Cal-Surf News'*

The Organization of Lifeguarding

When the city of Santa Cruz, California, hosted the 1989 national championships of the US Lifesaving Association (USLA), the competition alone netted an estimated \$250,000 for the city and captured media attention nationwide. In fact, lifeguard competitions are popular on many beaches around the country.

The USLA is the national professional alliance of open-water lifeguards, dedicated to improving lifeguarding conditions and water safety techniques. The organization is grouped in 7 regions and now has 271 chapters nationwide. In addition to its 12000 professional members, the USLA has an equal number of nonvoting members, including associates, alumni and junior lifeguards.¹

Lifeguarding involves athletes of all ages. Many youths begin training as lifeguards through the USLA's Junior Lifeguard Program. The average age of most part-time guards is 19. But in Los Angeles County, 75% of the 103 full-time guards are older than 35.²

Keys to Injury Prevention

Unlike other multisport activities such as triathlons, each lifeguarding activity uses similar, if not identical muscle groups. The shoulders and back are especially stressed and frequently injured during swimming, paddling, rowing and line pulling. Furthermore, an injury that oc-

curs during one lifeguarding activity will often lead to performance problems in other activities, which may then compound the injury.

However, many injuries caused by overuse and misuse can be prevented if the lifeguards take simple precautions suggested by their physicians:

- Stretch and warm up thoroughly before exercising, and avoid overuse of vulnerable areas during training. Structure workouts to include gradual early season increases. Many strains, sprains and other overuse and misuse problems can be avoided with proper conditioning.

- Maintain proper form while exercising. Performing lifeguarding activities with incorrect techniques can result in many of the injuries described in this article. An experienced coach or senior guard should monitor technique in all lifeguarding activities.

- Use a sunscreen and wear protective clothing. Waterproof sunblocks with a SPF factor of at least 15 can help safeguard at-risk areas against damaging ultraviolet rays. Wide-brimmed hats provide added protection for exposed skin.

- Wear protective footwear. The USLA is evaluating the use of protective footwear such as Aquasocks (Nike, Beaverton, Oregon) as a means of preventing common foot injuries among lifeguards.³

Physicians can also be watchful for a

variety of conditions during routine evaluations:

- Anticipate and monitor conditions such as degenerative changes and shoulder impingement, particularly among older guards who may be more vulnerable.

- Watch for signs and symptoms of skin problems. Rashes, abnormal pigmentation, or new, changing, or nonhealing lesions are just a few indications of more serious skin problems. Thorough monthly examinations of the skin for these and other warning signs can catch many problems while they can still be effectively treated.

- Keep patients up-to-date on tetanus vaccination, and consider administering hepatitis vaccination.

Other specific preventive measures, such as changes in the length of oars and in the style of seat in rowboats, are more specific and cannot be adequately considered here.

If injuries do occur, standard sports medicine treatment and rehabilitation procedures usually apply, such as decreased use of the affected area, application of hot or cold packs, administration of anti-inflammatory medications, and stretching, conditioning, and technique monitoring. During rehabilitation and recovery, injured guards may not be effective in performing rescue operations and may be better placed in positions requiring lighter duty.

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A Tribute to Vince Moorhouse

(July 10, 1931 - January 22, 1992)

(Continued from p. 1)

upgraded the lifesaving ideology. He influenced others to treat lifesaving as a profession and not just as seasonal work. He developed the system of using lifeguards in towers to spot trouble while deploying others to effect the rescue and created the first underwater search-and-recovery team. He is also credited as a founder of the "blackball" system, designed as a compromise to minimize aquatic accidents between the boardsurfers and the beachgoers.

"The business of saving lives is serious and necessitates a rigid organization, like it or not," said Moorhouse.

In the summer of 1949, Moorhouse commenced his 35-year career in the marine safety field, serving as a recurrent lifeguard for the City of Huntington Beach. After two summer seasons, he joined the US Navy as a member of the elite Underwater Demolition Team from 1951-55. He served as an instructor and was in combat during the Korean War.

Upon completion of his military

"In early 1957, an outstanding waterman by the name of Vince Moorhouse was selected as Lifeguard Chief," said Surf Coach Chuck Allen.

service, Moorhouse returned to the City of Huntington Beach where he applied his military training to marine safety as a Lifeguard Lieutenant in 1955. One year later, he was promoted to Lifeguard Captain while continuing his educational endeavors. He was soon appointed full-time Lifeguard Chief in 1957. From 1957-66, he was instrumental in formulating the perimeter defense lifeguard system that is still employed today.

Moorhouse likened the work of the lifeguard's watch to a military effort. He changed the spacing of the towers with "overlapping lines of vision" to make sure there were no gaps in the areas that each guard was responsible for. He ordered all lifeguards to report to duty wearing khaki uniforms and CPO caps with badges above the trademark red trunks.

In 1965, Moorhouse was one of the Founding Fathers of the Huntington Beach Surf Life Saving Association (HBSLSA),

the National Surf Lifesaving Association (NSLSA), and worked towards the creation of the USLA, a change that would include all open-water lifeguards among its membership. It was out of this organization that came the Western United States Surf Lifesaving Association (WUSLA), known today as the California Surf Lifesaving Association. He represented the NSLSA on the international scene as liaison officer for eight years, and he initiated the Auckland/California lifeguard exchange program. He served as President of the NSLSA from 1974-76. In 1976, he was elected President of the World Life Saving organization, dedicated to the humanitarian cause of lifesaving with members from over 22 nations today.

In 1966, Moorhouse was appointed Director of Harbors & Beaches for Huntington City Beach. For the next 13 years, he was responsible for the development of the City beachfront as it is seen today. With
(Continued on p. 7)



Circa 1992: On February 19, 1992, the City of Huntington Beach held a memorial service to the seemingly invincible retired Lifeguard Chief, and former National and World Life Saving President, Vincent Grigsby Moorhouse.

Improve Your Lifesaving Skills

San Clemente Marine Safety

Lt. Bill Humphreys offers tips for lifeguards

Quite a few years ago, I realized that the less thinking I had to do while responding on a rescue, the better I did. This led me to develop a system for everything I did.

For example, I always put my binos where my right hand could reach them without looking, likewise with my phone by my left hand. I always carried my buoy in my right hand, my fins in my left. The only thing I had to think about was putting on my fins right-side-up which, inevitably, in a critical rescue situation, ended upside down.

To simplify putting on my fins, I came up with the following recommendations for duck feet type fins (no left or right):

1. The key to this system is to always carry your fins with their bottoms together (back to back). This way no matter how they are put down in your tower or unit, you know which way is which.

2. Start by holding your fins by the straps. Put one fin on the foot opposite the hand holding your fins. Since I hold my fins in my left hand, I put my right fin on first. With practice it will automatically be right side up.

3. Switch the second fin to your other hand. It will now be positioned right-side-up for the other foot. Again, with practice this will become automatic.

With a little practice this system, or any other that works best for you, can help automate your response to rescues. Without having to think about your fins, binos, phone, etc., you can concentrate on more important things like keeping your eyes on the victim(s) while responding to the rescue.

The point is to develop and perfect a system that works best for you. Good luck.

Yours in lifesaving,
Bill Humphreys

If you have a tip that you would like to share, please send it to:

Mike Bartlett, Editor, CSLSA
P.O. Box 366, Huntington Beach, CA 92648
FAX (714) 374-1500

25 Dorys Competed in 1991 Season

By Kai Weisser

The 1991 National Dorymen's Association season was the most successful ever with up to 25 boats competing in each surf race! Rowing in some of the middle distance races with Scott Hubbell's PSLA events encouraged more participation in those races, and engendered fierce competition.

The NDA honored Paul Matthies, the Godfather of dory racing in California, at its awards banquet in October. Paul Matthies has been competing in the dories since the late 1950's and developed such improvements to the boats as the false bottom and scupper holes.

The NDA inaugurated the 'Paul Matthies Perpetual Trophy' which will be awarded to the crew earning the most points on the NDA circuit. Kevin Merrill and his partner Shaun McFarland won the trophy for 1991. Jake Jacobson and Dale Hast were awarded the trophy for 1990 to honor their long string of victories.

The 1992 season looks very good. There will be additional long distance races, including a race from Anacapa Island to Oxnard Harbor, a distance of about 13 miles.

The NDA presented its first Winter races in 1992. In January and February the NDA will hosted a mid-distance race and a surf race. It also hosted a golf tournament in February. For more information, call the NDA President, Al Lavayen, (714) 367-1088.



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Moorhouse

(Continued from page 5)

the implementation of Moorhouse's ideas, the city attained one of the first self-supporting beach operations in Southern California. Observers from around the world came to Huntington Beach to see how Moorhouse ran his marine safety operation. In 1979, Moorhouse was appointed as Director of Community Services with responsibilities expanding to include the City Library, Recreation and Human Services, Marine Safety, Beach Maintenance and Parking Divisions.

“There was the right way, the wrong way and the Vince Moorhouse way. And more often than not, his way turned out to be right!”, said Captain Richardson.

In 1984, Moorhouse retired from city service and moved to the Bitterroot Valley near Victor, Montana. With over 80 acres of ranch land that he loved as much as he loved the beach, Moorhouse could not remain uninvolved in community affairs. He worked diligently to eliminate the polarization that existed between the timber industry, the US Forest Service

and the citizens of the Bitterroot Valley. His efforts were directed toward helping those factions in negotiating agreements that would preserve and benefit the natural surrounding environment.

Moorhouse passed away on January 22, 1992, in Missoula, Montana, not far from the home he loved, yet far from the sea he respected and cherished. A special memorial service was held at Huntington City Beach on Feb. 19 for his friends and colleagues in the lifesaving profession that he left behind. Nearly 30 emergency vehicles and seven rescue vessels, from numerous agencies along the coast, processioned in formation with red lights flashing in symbolic mourning.

Moorhouse's many accomplishments, his impact on so many lives, and his supreme dedication, survive him through the legacy he leaves in the valley from the efforts he made to bring people together, through the individuals he worked with, and the professional goals and ideals he strived to attain for lifesaving. His influences in the lifesaving community and the professionalism he brought to it, will be remembered by all who follow in his footsteps.

The CSLSA sends its deepest condolences to his wife, LaRue, and his family as he will be dearly missed by his friends here in the lifesaving profession. We SALUTE you, Vince!



Circa Pre-1964: Applying his military training to marine safety, Chief Moorhouse at the wheel on 5210 transports rescue divers Max Bowman, center and Mike Hennessey to the scene of an accident.

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Lifeguards, Waveriders Welcome Grand Opening of New Huntington Beach Pier

By Mike Bartlett

After nearly four years of waiting and over 12-million dollars of construction costs, the new Huntington Beach Municipal Pier is scheduled to debut on July 17, 1992. Marine Safety personnel and local waveriders are eagerly awaiting and welcoming the event.

Despite this winter's weather setbacks, officials of Reidel International, the pier contractor, are optimistic that the finishing touches will be completed prior to the opening day on Friday, July 17. In fact, the City Council has approved the okay of three-day, pier grand-opening festivities. More than 150,000 people are expected to attend the Pierfest '92. At this point, rumors have it that Van Halen will be playing live on the beach, sky divers will be falling from the clouds above, volleyball and surf contests will be happening, media and politicians will cover the sands, all with the Goodyear Blimp and the police helicopter flying overhead!

Regardless of the carnival-like surroundings, the new pier will be a blessing for the lifeguards and waveriders without a doubt. Since the pier demolition and trestle construction began December 1990, the

lifeguards have issued thousands of warnings, written several hundred citations, and made numerous arrests in order to enforce the "closed area" for the pier construction safety zone. The safety zone has been closed to all water activities, surfing, boogie boarding or otherwise, 150 feet on both sides of the pier, marked by yellow buoys in the water and signs on the beach.

During the past year, relations between marine safety personnel and the waveriding public has been severely compromised due to the "closed area" enforcement. Some waveriders, intentionally and repeatedly, disobey marine safety authorities in order to catch that perfect wave peeling into the pier where several thousand pounds of steel and concrete carried from the cranes above!

The original pier, built in 1914, was closed in July 1988, six months after a devastating winter storm damaged the last 250 feet of the structure. Without a doubt, the lifeguards and the waveriders will welcome the opening of the pier, as the local shops and hotels will welcome the economic stimulation the pier opening will bring!

A Word From the President.....

(Continued from p. 2)

meetings. The CSLSA Executive Board also attends the Spring and Fall USLA meetings throughout the country.

Both the national and the region offer a competition to it's membership during the summer. The California Surf Lifesaving Championships will be hosted by the San Clemente Ocean Festival on July 18, 1992. The United States Lifesaving Championships will be hosted by the Gulf Coast Region in Galveston, Texas, August 6-8, 1992. Competitors must be members of the organization as prescribed by the USLA and CSLSA By-laws. Qualifying members may be selected to represent the USLA in international competition. The USLA has just completed a tour in Japan placing third in the World Lifesaving Championships held this June. Members are also eligible to compete in the Taplin Relay hosted by the International Surf Festival in Manhattan Beach, August 1, 1992. There will be two Australian teams competing and the more teams the better.

You see there are many aspects of the organization(s) and there is something for everyone. As in any volunteer organization, there are those who DO and there are those who DO NOT. If you DO, you become part of the solution, gain self satisfaction, and meet many great people with the same interests. For those who DO NOT, they just sit back, complain, and become part of the problem. Those people are always asking what the organization does for them instead of what they can do for the organization. These organizations: Chapter; CSLSA; and USLA; are run by lifeguards purely for public safety and the betterment of fellow lifeguards. Because of this dedication, the public is served with the latest information in the field of lifesaving.

We all look forward to a busy, safe season. Remember, professionals are professional! Members of the CSLSA are the best lifeguards in the world.

Beach Safety Tips

1. Learn to swim, never swim alone, and always swim near a lifeguard.
2. Check with the lifeguards for hazardous beach and surf conditions.
3. Respect the beach and obey the posted rules and regulations.
4. Always check the water depth with your feet to prevent head injuries.
5. Never dive head first as underwater hazards will cause serious injury.
6. Weather and surf conditions are constantly changing the sand bottom.
7. Ask the lifeguard about ocean hazards like holes, rips and side currents.
8. Avoid the dangerous areas and stay close to shore when the surf is up.
9. If you're pulled offshore by a rip, stay calm, it will not pull you under.
10. Swim parallel to shore out of the rip into calm water, then swim directly to shore.

CSLSA

COMPETITION

NEWS

Ride-long with another lifeguard agency

California Inter-Agency Lifeguard Exchange Program

By Kai Weisser

It is now official! California lifeguards do not have to go overseas to New Zealand or Australia just to visit other lifesaving agencies.

The CSLSA has initiated the essential steps to foster an exchange program along it's own California Coast. The one-day, ride-along format is intended for professional lifeguards interested in observing operations from other agencies.

Guidelines & Requirements

- (1) Use the official application provided.
- (2) Applicants should be experienced, seasoned professional lifeguards and knowledgeable of his/her respective agency in all aspects.
- (3) Each exchange lifeguard visiting an agency should be on the payroll and considered on official business, for example training in appropriate uniform.
- (4) Each exchange lifeguard should utilize a ride-along method while observing the host agency.
- (5) Use the official questionnaire provided.
- (6) Please forward copies of all applications and questionnaires to each respective agency and to the CSLSA Exchange Committee.

Additionally, the CSLSA encourages each agency to participate by approving two lifeguard exchange applications from it's staff each season. The long range goal is to contact all agencies in Southern California.

If you have any questions please contact the CSLSA Exchange Committee Chairman, Kai Weisser, at (714) 536-5281.

By the time you read this, the USLA National Team will have returned from Rescue '92 in Shimoda, Japan. The CSLSA will be well represented by Diane Graner, Patty Richards, Randy Eickhoff, Paul Donohue and Craig Hummer. Mitch Kahn was selected to be on the team, but was unable to go since he made the Olympic Kayaking Team. Congratulations, Mitch, and best of luck to all USLA team members in Japan. Special thanks to Head Coach Tim Gallagher.

There have been several rule changes that will go into effect this year. Women's events now score through tenth, with awards through fifth at Regionals and Nationals. The gunwhale height rule written by CSLSA members was adopted into the National rulebook. Wave deflectors are now mandatory for surf skis and a Rescue Board Rescue Race was added for the Open Division only.

The 1000 meter swim will now be the "Surf Rave" of about 400 meters. The Run-

Swim-Run course was shortened and simplified. The distances in the Run-Swim-Run are now 200 run - 300 swim - 200 run. The board and ski races were shortened to 800 meters. The 10' 6" paddleboard was not adopted, but there will be a 10' 6" demonstration event at Regionals and Nationals this year. I urge anyone with a 10' 6" board to please compete. The 10' 6" rule was re-submitted with a three year phase-in period. It will be voted on at the Fall 1992 National meeting. A new rule book is out in rough draft form and will be in finished form before Regionals.

Speaking of Regionals, they will be at San Clemente again this year. The date is July 18, and once again there will be no entry fee. The Australian five-man Surf boats will race in a demonstration event at Regionals and Nationals. Nationals are in Galveston, Texas on August 6, 7 and 8 where the host event will *(Continued on p. 10)*

Weddings By the Sea

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For further information call the City of Solana Beach, (619) 755-2937.

This is the 28th year of the annual lifeguard exchange program between California and New Zealand lifeguards. Anyone interested in applying for this exchange should contact KaiWeisser, Exchange Committee Chairman, at (714) 536-5281.

New Zealand Lifeguard Exchange

Two Views from Down Under

Elizabeth Kubis's View.....

My mission is to observe and to share, to compare and contrast, to be open-minded to new and different ways of guarding and ways of life. When I first read the words, "congratulations on having been selected as one of two delegates for the 1992 California - Auckland Lifeguard Exchange", little did I know the experience that was in store.

What have I learned so far in this land of sheep and black sand beaches? For starters, choice is awesome, vollies and clubbies are the norm, jandals are sandals and dairies carry much more than they claim. IRB Rescues take precedence over tube rescues, and how do you say buoy?

Hard care means funny and a tramp in a hike. Te Atatu is a good place to live, while a Tuatua is a good thing to eat. The All Blacks and the America's Cup are not, while American Football, or Gridiron is definitely not.

It's east versus west and no worries mate - except for the UV Rays. Mossies are everywhere in the air and aye is everywhere in a Kiwi's conversation. To be pissed is to be plastered, while adding off to the former means you're mad. To spew is to boot but the boot is the trunk.

Fresh-up and paid guards go hand in hand. A mate can be your best friend or the guy at the gas station (or is it petrol?). Your nippers are our Junior guards and your juniors are our rookies. Differing vocabulary aside, when it comes down to it we speak a little different and radio calls might vary a bit but either way, they get the job done. Whether you call it a rescue or a 906, whether you patrol from a couch or from a tower, the goal is the same. A rip is still a rip, a preventative is still a preventative, ABC and CPR still work basically the same way, no matter what hemisphere you're from.

I'm grateful to the many guards and friends who have helped me see my job, as well as my life, from a whole new perspective. By pooling our knowledge through the exchange, we can but only benefit.

Tim Cicchetto's View.....

The end result is saving lives and ensuring beach safety. It really doesn't matter how you get the job done, just as long as it gets done.

Although our countries are miles apart, we share the common bond in that we all save lives. New Zealanders come about this by being clubbies, surf rats, or just plain beachgoers. Not everyone has this opportunity in life, to spend so much time at the beach. Therefore they are naive of the awesome power that the ocean possesses. Since this is our domain, it is our job to ensure that the people that visit our back yards remain safe from its grasp. It all seems so natural to do this type of work because these are the surroundings in which we have grown up in.

In New Zealand, you have the surf clubs, located in areas most frequented by bathers. The paid guards are the talent of the beach. The "vollies" and the juniors are the up and coming talent; the ones in which the knowledge is passed on to. (I mean no disrespect for 'vollies' whom possess surf knowledge but have other professions).

You have the freedom to explore and test new horizons and your own integrity. If you want to learn something, you just go out and do it, mistakes and all. This is how you succeed. In California, at least at my beach, we must perform within very restricted perimeters with little or no lee-way. Self expression and development are restricted tremendously. Most everyone wants us to be very professional in our work. They expect that from us because our pay checks are their tax dollars.

At your beaches, it seems that the community is their life. The population of that town can understand this. Basically they trust your judgement. You have a good working relationship with them and perhaps their children are clubbies or nippers.

In California, the population is so vast that many people just don't know anything about Lifeguards. They are ignorant of the knowledge we possess of the
(Continued on p. 11)



Competition News

(Continued from p. 9)

be a four-man swim relay. The 1993 Nationals are scheduled for Los Angeles on August 5, 6 and 7 with LACOLA and the L.A. County Department of Beaches and Harbors as co-hosts.

There will be two teams from Australia visiting our coast this summer. The Central Coast Branch will be here in July as part of their coast to coast tour, and a team from Victoria will be here to defend the Weiland Shield against the CSLSA team on July 31.

The racing season for the PSLA starts on July 27 at Port Hueneme and has a total of ten events, concluding at the Manhattan Beach Pier on August 29.

Lifeguarding: The Sport...

(Continued from p. 4)

Staying Well to Save Lives

Many of the injuries sustained by lifeguards are also common among swimmers, runners, surfers, and rowers. But lifeguards are actually more vulnerable than other athletes to come of these injuries. Understanding both these vulnerabilities and the extensive training and competition of lifeguarding will allow the excellent healthcare needed to help lifeguards stay healthy and compete - and will help keep lifeguards ready to save lives.

References

1. Moore R: California USLA Statistics for 1988. American Lifeguard 1988;4(2):24
2. Shoepf GA: Mid Atlantic Regional Report. American Lifeguard 1989;5(4):13
3. Fletemeyer J: Lifeguard foot injuries occurring in the beach environment and an evaluation of protective footwear as a means to prevent this problem. Read before the US Lifesaving Association, Southeast region, Newport, RI, November 1989

Tim Ciochetto's View

(Continued from p.10)

ocean. Hence it has no direct effect on their lives and our opinions or judgements are not regarded with much worth. The Lifeguards and some small groups in the beach area but for the most part we lose out on that spirit with the general community.

To give you an example of what I mean: An elderly man was rescued from a rip current at 'United' as part of a mass rescue over a weekend. A few days later this man came down to the club to give a donation of money. This is how your community reacts. They respect your presence. This has happened more than once that I've seen and it really surprised me. This doesn't happen very often in the big city where I come from. Most of us are just taken for granted.

Keep up the great work!!

Understanding the "El Nino" with Meteorologist Sean Collins

By Mike Bartlett

What will the surf be like this summer?

This question frequently asked by surfers to lifeguards can only be answered by one man...Surfline owner Sean Collins.

This winter California had the best surf in over 10 years, explained Sean Collins, who has been in the surf forecasting business since the late 1980's.

"It looks like it's going to be an incredible summer," said Collins.

The water temperatures range from 61 to 64 degrees Fahrenheit for the normal spring season. "We're averaging 4 to 5 degrees above that, and there are pockets that are much warmer," he said.

The "June Gloom," the transition period from Spring to Summer when the morning skies are overcast, could be shorter than normal due to the unseasonable warm ocean temperatures.

Last summer, the water temperatures from the tip of Baja to Northern California averaged 2 to 3 degrees cooler as did the air temperatures. Weather and surf forecasters agree that this summer has the possibility of being unseasonable warmer than usual due to the strong "El Nino" condition.

The "El Nino" is a periodic climatic change that occurs along the South Pacific equatorial region. When the normal westbound trade winds in the region gradually fade and give way to the eastbound winds, an "El Nino" condition occurs. The warmer eastbound winds blow the warm South Pacific waters towards South America. This wind change will push warm water northeast up to Mexico, thus pushing Mexico's warm water north up the coast to California.

In the summer of 1990, the mild "El Nino" condition generated the warmest recorded water temperatures in Southern California in over 50 years! That condition allowed giant squid, sea turtles, dorado and forms of jellyfish to travel here in warm currents from Mexico. The warm water killed much of the kelp beds, causing a yellow-frothy ocean surface from the dying seaweed.

Experts are predicting a major "El Nino." Hurricanes that form south off the tip of Baja generally gain speed and strength in warm water, and loose speed and power in cold water. There is the potential for hurricanes to travel further north, generating larger and more consistent surf. The last hurricane to hit Southern California was in 1969.



On February 19, 1992, 30 emergency vehicles and 7 rescue vessels from agencies along the coast processioned in formation in symbolic morning of the passing of Vince Moorhouse.

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