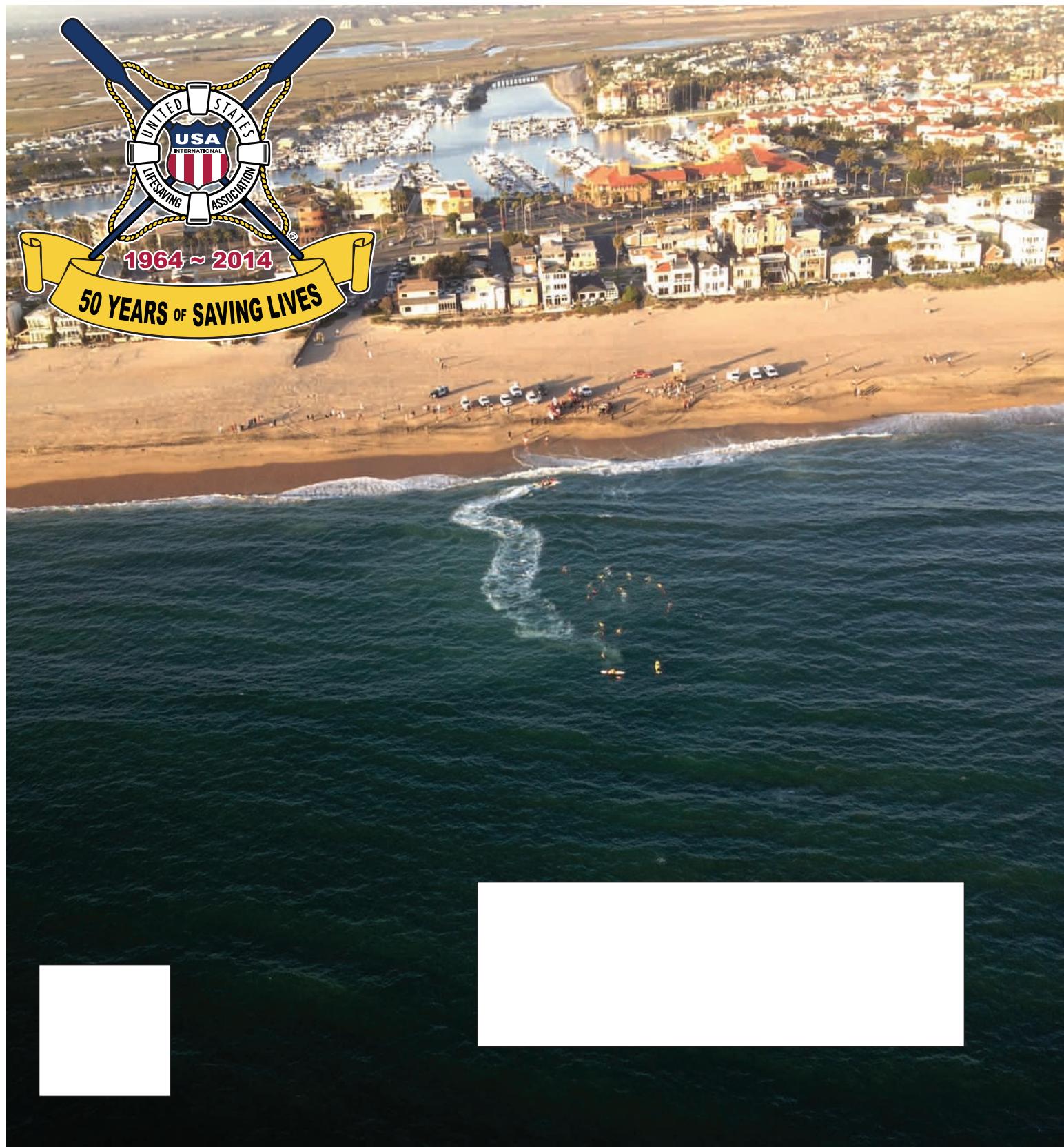


# American LIFEGUARD™

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A United States Lifesaving Association Publication

SUMMER 2014 - VOL. 31, NO. 3



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**Cover Shot:** Huntington Beach Lifeguards conduct a Code X (witnessed drowning) underwater search and rescue of a swimmer at Sunset Beach on April 14, 2014, at approx. 6pm. Although his body was recovered nearly 50 minutes later in 12 feet of water, sadly he was pronounced dead at the hospital. See article in this issue. Photo courtesy of Claude Panis, Huntington Beach, CA.

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We are America's nonprofit, professional association of beach lifeguards and open water rescuers. USLA works to reduce the incidence of death and injury in the aquatic environment through public education, national lifeguard standards, training programs, promotion of high levels of lifeguard readiness, and other means. All correspondence other than for the magazine should be sent to: USLA Corporate Office, P.O. Box 366, Huntington Beach, CA 92648 or president@usla.org.

## American Lifeguard Magazine™

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## ALM Advertising Information

The USLA manages the American Lifeguard Magazine™ and publishes it tri-annually with mailing deadlines: Fall-November 1, Winter-Feb. 1 and Summer-June 1. The 36-page color publication, now archived on our website, is mailed directly to our 12,000 members comprised of ocean lifeguards, administrators, competitors, junior guards and alumni. It showcases the lifesaving profession and juniors by targeting a variety of public safety topics including training and standards, competitions, certification and educational programs. Promote your products and services by delivering your message directly to the lifesaving professionals and managers who are responsible for purchasing products for their agencies and individual needs. Below are the ALM ad rates:

Ad Size Only	One Issue	Three Issues
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# PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

B. Chris Brewster, San Diego, CA

On the evening of February 4, 1964 a meeting took place in Redondo Beach, California that would change American lifesaving forever. Lifeguard representatives from seven agencies in Orange and Los Angeles Counties were there. They had received a written proposal from Los Angeles County lifeguard Bob Burnside to create a national association of beach lifeguards and now they chewed it over for a couple of hours. Then they voted.

Before this, back in 1956, some California lifeguards had created the Surf Life Saving Association of America so they could qualify to be our "national team" and participate in a lifeguard competition in Australia. After the competition they kept it alive and it had become one of 10 members of the International Surf Life Savers Association (ISLSA).

Then in the winter of 1963 Burnside invited Vince Moorehouse and Max Bowman of Huntington Beach, Don Rohrer and Dick Heineman of Los Angeles City, Tim Dorsey of Seal Beach, Jim Richards of California State Parks, and Rudy Kroon of Santa Monica to a concept meeting in Santa Monica. His idea was to create a national organization of professional lifesavers. They agreed he should circulate a proposal and invite all California lifeguard agencies to participate.

In his written proposal leading up to the meeting Burnside outlined the plan: "The proposed national organization, with every means of representation, enlightenment and communication at its disposal, can lead the way to an era of modern efficient service with standards and equipment equal on all public beaches and parity in pay standards throughout all agencies."

He continued, "Assuming various lifeguard services accept this proposed merger, the present US branch [of the ISLSA] will dissolve its officers and board of directors and local chapters will elect new US officers and boards of directors in accordance with the international constitution and bylaws... The



national organization will be made up of two men from each local chapter and who form the board of directors, who in turn will elect this association's officers."

On January 14, 1964 representatives from Los Angeles City, Los Angeles County, Santa Monica City, Huntington Beach, Long Beach, California State Parks, Newport Beach, and San Clemente convened and discussed the proposal. They decided to return to their respective areas and explain the complete proposal to all prospective members (including proposed dues of \$3 per month for full time lifeguards and \$2 per month in summer for seasonal lifeguards). They agreed to reconvene to express the feelings of the life-

guards in their agencies.

Now, on February 4 they reassembled. Present this time were representatives from L.A. City, L.A. County, Long Beach, Huntington Beach, Newport Beach, State Beach District 5, State Beach District 6, and Seal Beach. The dues were modified to \$3 per month for full time lifeguards and \$1 per month in summer for seasonal lifeguards. Tentative board members were identified. Most importantly, every delegate supported the proposed organization with the exception of Long Beach, whose representatives chose to abstain. And so, what is now the United States Lifesaving Association was born.

At the following meeting of March 10, 1964 Burnside proposed election of temporary officers and moved the nomination of Vince Moorehouse (Huntington Beach) as Chairman of the Board. Burnside was subsequently elected Secretary and Don Rohrer was elected Treasurer.

On March 15, 1964 the Surf Life Saving Association of America issued a press release. They announced expansion of their membership to include professional beach lifeguards employed along most of Southern California's public beaches. They outlined key goals:

- To work for the adoption of the best lifesaving methods by all public agencies
- To promote the use of the best available equipment by lifeguards
- To encourage improved training and education of both the professional lifeguard and the beach using public
- Consultation and advice to any public agency whenever in the best interest of public safety
- To work generally for the improvement of the professional status of lifeguarding

Many meetings took place that year. Bylaws were developed, incorporations filed, and much was discussed. The meetings continued the following year and on July 23, 1965, the Board of Directors of the organization elected its first officers: Bob Burnside, President; Dick Hazard (San Clemente), Vice President; Don Rohrer, Treasurer; Max Bowman Secretary; and Jim Richards, Sergeant at Arms.

Those days of yore are now 50 years behind us and it is just that we pause in reflection and celebration. The prescience of those lifeguards in 1964 was extraordinary. The leadership that crafted an organization that has survived these many years was of immeasurable value to us all.

Over the ensuing years, our organization would be tested in many different ways. We expanded to include beach lifeguards across the US and are now a true national organization which the founders could only imagine. Our name changed to embrace a desire to embrace all beach lifeguards and open water rescuers. There were disagreements, some of titanic proportion that threatened the viability of the organization. Through it all though, the core goals of the founders survived.

We adopted national guidelines that have become the de facto standard for the training and equipping of America's beach lifeguards. We created a certification system to accredit lifeguard agencies that follow the guidelines, with over 125 now certified. We developed an internationally recognized textbook for the training of beach lifeguards that is used in this country and in others. In these and other ways, we have elevated the profession of beach lifeguarding well beyond what it might otherwise be and we have created a buttress against diminution.

Our public education materials are now in wide use, both in printed or electronic form. Our chapters and agencies give public safety lectures to some 250,000 people each year. We are widely recognized as one of the preeminent drowning prevention organizations in the United States.

We work side-by-side with government and nongovernment organizations to advance drowning prevention and lifeguard

standards. Just a few of these are the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the National Weather Service, Sea Grant, the National Park Service, the US Coast Guard, the American Red Cross, and the YMCA of the USA.

Internationally, we are the USA's Full Member of the International Life Saving Federation and one of its founding members. We support the development of lifeguarding internationally, but also in this country. Many lifeguard agencies here in the US would not exist in their present form were it not for the dogged advocacy of the USLA.

And true to our original roots, we have maintained a focus on lifesaving competition as a means to strengthen bonds, strengthen lifesavers, and promote our profession. Local, regional, and national competitions have become a staple of American lifesaving.

Through all this, we have grown our membership to reach every part of the USA. We've added junior lifeguards as a key membership group. We've ensured that every beach lifeguard, in every part of the USA is welcome to contribute.

It is safe to say that we have met and exceeded the expectations of the founders. It has not been easy, nor has it come without great sacrifice. Every advance has come as a result of the volunteer contributions, in time and money, of lifeguards and others who have embraced the vision moving us forward. Each contribution is priceless.

It is a time now to recognize our founders for what they have done for us all. And it is a time to recognize all of those who came after them and worked to ensure that the USLA would survive and thrive.

All the beach lifeguards of America owe every contributor a debt of gratitude, for none of us would be as well respected, as well trained, or as well-equipped were it not for the work that has been done. The American public and our visitors also owe a debt of gratitude for the enhancements to safety and reductions in drowning brought about by our public education work. Untold numbers of people and their families are safe and healthy due to the work of the USLA.

Finally, we need to recognize that this 50th anniversary is but a milestone along a road that leads into the future. The contributions of the leaders of the past and present will mean little without leaders of the future to secure our achievements and expand all the further into new areas of lifesaving. We trust in you just as the founders trusted in us.

Thank you founders. Thank you successors. Thank you future leaders. All of us Lifeguards for Life.

# TSUNAMI ALERTS NOW ON SMARTPHONES

B. Chris Brewster, San Diego, CA

The National Weather Service has announced that they will now be issuing tsunami warnings in the United States through the Wireless Emergency Alert (WEA) system. All WEA capable mobile phones (newer smartphones) in the affected area will receive the alert.

Lifeguard agencies need to be aware that beachgoers with smartphones will receive these warnings in real time, meaning in some cases sooner than lifeguards themselves may receive them. It is therefore prudent to consider having response and evacuation protocols in place to advise beachgoers of what they should do in these unusual, life-threatening cases. Lifeguards should also know how to protect themselves.

Initially the NWS will activate WEA only for tsunami warnings, not for tsunami information statements, advisories, or



watches. The NWS states that they will issue one warning only. Subsequent warnings from the same event will not activate WEA and cancellations will not be issued through this system.

WEA messages are limited to 90 characters and the messages may be sent to smartphones in large areas that are not immediately imperiled (for example inland areas of a large coastal county). The message is therefore intended to inform people regardless of their location. The following was the wording in place at the time of ALM printing: "Tsunami danger on the coast. Go to high ground or move inland. Listen to local news. – NWS"

To learn more and how to partner with the NWS to become tsunami ready, visit: [www.tsunamiready.noaa.gov](http://www.tsunamiready.noaa.gov)

## 'THE WORLD'S OLDEST 18-YEAR-OLD' OUR PERSONAL JOURNEYS TEAM

Barbara Marshall, Reprinted with permission, The Palm Beach Post

***Tommy Hogan found what he loved early in life and has never left it.***

The happy man wakes up every morning feeling worthy of the name. Let the rest of the world worry itself into a Xanax prescription over debt ceilings and health care. The happy man has a warm blue ocean waiting, nature's antidote to anxiety.

"Hey, man," he used to say to the envious cubicle crowd. "It's work." It was and someone had to do it. Luckily, for 25 years, it was him, presiding over the waves rolling up to the Palm Beach shore. Lucky too, for the more than 100 people who owe him their lives, although the happy man shuns talk of heroics.

"Happy is the man who can make a living by his hobby," wrote George Bernard Shaw. Shaw would have approved of Tommy Hogan. Still in the swim at 78 For more than half a century, life has been a beach for this former Palm Beach lifeguard, current beach champion and forever beach bum.

He sees no reason for it to change just because he's retired and pushing 80. Hogan flings a hat and swim goggles in his

truck. He tosses a red rescue buoy behind his seat. Old habits die hard. If there's a swell, he might latch a surfboard on his customized board racks. On other days, he takes a paddleboard or a contraption called a surf ski, a lightweight ocean kayak, one of his only concessions to his age. More than 50 years after Hogan, 78, entered his first lifeguard competition, he won six medals in his age group at the 2013 U.S. Lifesaving Association's Lifeguard Championships in Manhattan Beach, Calif. He still represents his former employer, the Town of Palm Beach Ocean Rescue Unit. "This guy is a legend from coast to coast," said John Amman, a fellow former Palm Beach lifeguard and longtime friend. "A few years ago, I turned on ESPN one day and there's Tommy in the frickin' Ironman in Hawaii." "I'm just a happy man," says Hogan, who seems to have outwitted adulthood. "I found what I love when I was a kid and never did anything else." Said Amman, "Tommy's the world's oldest 18-year-old." 'Did I ever tell ya...!' Hogan likes to talk almost as much as he likes to swim. And he really likes to swim. For fun, he swims a mile, maybe a mile and a half in

the ocean. His stories are at least that long. "Hey, did I ever tell ya..." he begins and a yarn tumbles out like a tidal surge. In the "swimming with sharks" category: He was about a quarter mile out over 80 feet of water when he spotted a 12-foot hammerhead keeping pace below him, shaking its anvil-shaped head from side to side to keep Hogan in view. "That shark didn't stop following me until my feet touched sand," he said. Another time, he noticed a friend on the beach wildly waving at him. Looking around, Hogan spotted three bull sharks circling him. Bull sharks, he discovered, make excellent swimming coaches. He flew toward the beach. "Most sharks won't bother you, but bull sharks will hit you," he said. In the 1980s, he was Amman's training officer for the Palm Beach lifeguard squad. They were swimming over the reef when Amman looked down. He grabbed Hogan's ankle. "Sharks. Tommy, there are sharks down there," Amman recalled yelling.

"Yeah, they live here," Hogan calmly told him, and resumed swimming. "This guy, he's a classic, I'm telling you," said Amman, who eventually traded his blue lifeguard trunks for a Worth Avenue art dealer's blue blazer. Rock stars on the beach Hogan has spent so much time in salt water that fish have mistaken him for a pelagic pal. A remora attached itself to his chest one day during a workout and hung on. "It thought I was a shark, I guess," he said. Unable to dislodge the suckerfish, he kept swimming, the confused remora trailing from Hogan's chest like one of his championship ribbons.

Hogan's tales veer into each other in conversational collisions, hopscotching back and forth across the decades. A story about meeting John Lennon morphs into one about getting chewed out by Jimmy Buffett's wife. This would be the "Famous Rock Stars I Met on the Beach" category. It was the fall of 1980 and town lifeguards used to jog a mile south of the Midtown beach to the big curve, then swim back. One day, a man with an English accent and little round glasses was on the beach with his family. "That's a long way to swim," the man said. The next day, they met again and introduced themselves. "My name's John Lennon," the man said. "I play in a group." "Cool, I'm Tommy Hogan, see ya around."

"None of us knew who he was," said Hogan. "Finally, someone told me about The Beatles. A few days later, he went back to New York and got shot." It was debatable who was the biggest star on the beach that day.

Surfing with Buffett "Our daughters used to say they couldn't go anywhere or get away with anything because everyone knew their dad," said Hogan's wife, Joyce, a retired

nurse. They've been married 52 years, all of them spent in the same house in unincorporated West Palm Beach, decorated with rope-wrapped dock pilings, shells and the sea glass Hogan collected from beaches around the world. They have two grown daughters and three grandchildren. "When he proposed, he said, 'Marry me. You'll never have a dull day.' He kept his promise," Joyce said. "He made me laugh and then sometimes I'd want to kill him. And, he talks too much." Unperturbed, Hogan has re-loaded. "Anyway, I was telling Jim he needed a bigger board ..." Jim? Were we talking about someone named Jim? "Oh, Jim's a singer I know. Jimmy Buffett. We surfed together when he lived around here." Oh, that Jim. Hogan said Buffett, who had a house just south of Midtown Beach, hired him as a lifeguard for his kids' pool parties. They became friends.

Hogan told Buffett his surfing skills required a longer board.

"I talked him into buying a bigger board, then Jim said, 'Now I've got to get a bigger plane for a 9-foot-6-inch board.' He put his boards in this sea plane he had. His wife, Jane, got mad at me. She said, 'Tommy, you stop that. He does not need a bigger plane!'" During one of Buffett's parties, he recalled talking to an interesting man, but told a friend he didn't get the guy's name.

"That was Harrison Ford," the friend told him. He pauses.

"I sound terrible that I didn't know who these people were, but I usually met them on the beach. I used to say, 'I didn't recognize you with clothes on. 'Snakes on the beach' The truth is that Hogan's heroes are other lifeguards, not celebrities. He was just out of high school in 1953 when he landed in Palm Beach; a Chicago lifeguard fleeing cold Lake Michigan waters.

"I just fell in love with the beach here," Hogan said. He got a job as a lifeguard at the saltwater Lido Pools at the old Palm Beach Pier complex, which also housed restaurants and a nightclub where everybody in town, everybody who was white, anyway, went to dance. "Man, this was the Jim Crow South," he says of those days. He rented an apartment above the pier, with a view of the ocean, for \$5 a week. In 1960, the Town hired him to guard a remote new beach called Phipps Park, more than 2 miles south of town. No condos had yet sprouted south of Sloan's Curve. Hogan was the only lifeguard on an empty beach bordered by sea grapes, which were home to an aggressive colony of Eastern diamondback rattlers. The snakes crawled onto the beach to warm up in the winter. At first, Hogan didn't have a

*continued on page 8*

phone or a radio in his guard booth. If he needed to call the police or an ambulance, he had to dig up a dime for the concession stand's pay phone. He says that's what he did when buses of black residents arrived one day in the early 1960s in an attempt to desegregate the whites-only beach. They were followed by hood-wearing Ku Klux Klansmen brandishing baseball bats, Hogan said. "The police came with paddy wagons to take people away," he recalled. At Phipps, his job was to save lives, kill the rattlers and try not to expire from boredom. After a fire station was built in the park in 1964, Hogan, the eternal adolescent, began pranking the firefighters. "I had killed a 4-foot-11-inch snake with 17 rattles. The firemen left a bakery box by the trash. I got the box, put the snake inside with its head held up by a stick, wrapped it up with ribbon and left it on a table inside the station, like a gift. The guy that opened it almost had a heart attack." Remembering, Hogan roars like a mischievous kid. Saving lives was his mission. But Hogan never took his job lightly. Once, he nearly lost it for taking his duty too seriously. A depression in the reef just south of Phipps Park boundary sometimes creates a powerful rip current. One day, Hogan left his post to rescue a swimmer being swept out to sea. "My boss said he'd fire me if I ever did it again. But the next year, I pulled somebody else out of that rip. I couldn't let those guys drown," said Hogan. In 60 years, he figures he's pulled more than 100 people out of the ocean, some of them close to death. "Their eyes were already rolled back in their heads when I threw them up on the beach," he said. "But they revived." He remembers only two who didn't. A little girl and an older man, he thinks. He's forced himself to forget. In 1973, he was reassigned to Midtown beach, where he spent his days perched at the intersection of Chilean Avenue and South Ocean Boulevard. He grew his blond hair to shoulder length and kept a lit cigar clamped between his teeth, at a time when even lifeguards smoked on the beach.

Five days a week, he sat three steps up on a small lifeguard stand the guards hoisted over the seawall every morning, and lifted back onto the sidewalk every evening. A beach umbrella taped to the stand counted for shade. "These guys today are guarding in hotels compared to what we had," he said.

Sunscreen was a swipe of zinc oxide on the nose, if that.

He holds up a blotchy red leg, pocked with waxy white bumps. "Basal cell cancers," he says. "They've taken off dozens of them. These are new." He's had a melanoma on his chest; a tumor was removed beneath his right eye and

another inside his lower left lip. Now he wears a hat with curtains to protect his neck and a long-sleeved T-shirt, even in the water. To make ends meet, Hogan worked nights as a valet parker at the Sailfish Club on the north end of Palm Beach, where he met town officials, socialites and movie stars. For a while, he was friendly with James Kimberly, the earring-wearing, Ferrari-racing grandson of the founder of Kimberly-Clark. Kimberly played a notorious role in the 1982 divorce trial of Roxanne and Peter Pulitzer. "He introduced me to Lee Marvin and Buddy Ebsen," said Hogan. His stories never end

"Hey, did I ever tell ya about ..." he begins again. Once, he pulled out an Irish setter caught in a rip current by putting a circular swim buoy over its head, to ongoing derision from the other guards. One day, he paddled several miles out to sea to save a young woman on a windsurfer. "We had a west wind, and she was getting pushed further and further out," Hogan said. She was almost to the Gulf Stream when Hogan caught up to her on his rescue board. "I could only see the very top of The Breakers, we were so far out." He hooked on to the windsurfer, laid down and started paddling for shore, pulling them both in against heavy wind. "It was killing me, but she was just lying on her board crying." Hogan ordered her to start paddling. "I was a little bit tired after that one," he said.

Around age 40, Hogan got fat. He weighed 220 pounds and didn't feel well. "I was drinking a lot, so I quit and started running marathons." At his fastest, Hogan ran 26.5 miles in 2 hours, 48 minutes. During one Orange Bowl Marathon, he kept up a 6:30 a mile pace with Joan Benoit for 20 miles before hitting the wall. Benoit went on to win a gold medal in the Olympics in 1984. Even after he retired in 1985 at age 49, he has continued to represent the Town of Palm Beach in lifeguard contests around the world. "The town has been really good to me," he said. Hogan walks more than he runs on the beach these days. He's got a bit of arthritis, but his blood pressure is 120 over 80, with a tiny medication assist. "My cardiologist said he'd be out of business if half his patients were like me," Hogan said. He's been training the next generation of the beach patrol through Lake Worth's Junior Lifeguard program.

And every day, the warm blue ocean waits. Mother Ocean, his friend Jim called it. "Being in the water is like being baptized, you're just cleansed. You can forget all about time, all about the world," says the happy man. Then he remembers.

"Hey, did I ever tell ya about..."

# I.B. LIFEGUARD RETIRES AT 70

## LIFEGUARD SPENT 47 YEARS PATROLLING THE SURF ZONE

Allison Sampite-Montecalvo, Reprinted with permission, U-T San Diego

IMPERIAL BEACH — If it were up to Thomas “Benny” Holt, he’d say he has been retired since he began working for the city of Imperial Beach as a lifeguard at age 24.

Saturday, however, was the 70-year-old’s official retirement after 47 years with the city.

“I don’t consider this work,” Holt said. “What a job, to get to work on the beach and get paid for it!”

On his last day, fellow lifeguards threw him a retirement party.

“It was a surprise,” said Robert Stabenow, Imperial Beach lifeguard captain. “A lot of former lifeguards were here. There was a lot of storytelling going on.”

The 2013 lifeguard team signed a photo and lifeguard buoy recognizing Holt for his dedication.

“This is the first lifeguard we’ve ever really retired,” Stabenow said.

Holt has always been a part time lifeguard for the city, working seven months out of the year.

“You don’t see that anymore,” Stabenow said. “People usually can’t make ends meet.”

But he also worked as a substitute teacher at Mar Vista High School where he’s currently the assistant cross country and track coach.

Stabenow first met Holt in 1983 when he became a lifeguard.

“Benny’s the type of person that always takes the younger person under his wing and is a mentor,” he said. “At the time I was into running and so we had that in common.”

“He’s dedicated to his job as a lifeguard,” Stabenow said. “He always gives 110 percent. He’s a true waterman.”

Stabenow said Holt is a reliable professional.

“He’ll get things done the way you need them to be done,” he said. “He’s just a really good person. You don’t

see that very often. He will definitely be missed.”

Holt was born in Imperial Beach and later joined the U.S. Air Force, which is where he first became a lifeguard while serving in Turkey.

“Growing up in I.B. I was kind of a beach bum,” he said.

Holt said it was his former boss Dempsey Holder, a former lifeguard and local surfer whose 16-foot statue occupies the end of Palm Avenue and Seacoast Drive, who interested him in lifeguarding.

“I looked up to him,” he said.

Holt said he’ll miss the camaraderie of the lifeguard environment and helping people in distress.

“It’s such a joy to be able to help somebody,” he said. “It feels good that you mean something to somebody.”

Lifeguard Supervisor Oscar Alvarez has known Holt more than 40 years.

“He’s easy going, real friendly,” he said. “A lot of people know him. You get a wealth of town community history from him.”

Alvarez said he’s somebody people knew they could talk to.

“It’s going to be strange not having him,” he said. “Not too many guys retire at 70 from lifeguarding.”

Imperial Beach resident John Warner, 64, is friends with Benny.

“He had a reputation...” Warner said. “Benny’s one of those rare birds that’s just a solid, genuine, good guy.”

Stabenow said almost everyone knows Benny from somewhere.

“I always think of Benny as the welcome wagon,” he said. “He’s a likable person and very positive.”

Warner said Holt’s retirement is only a transition, not a loss.

“He’s always going to be helping the community,” he said. “He’ll be in town as a new dimension.”

# **COMPETITION + ALUMNI REUNION + BEACH FESTIVAL = 2014 NAUTICA USLA NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS IN VIRGINIA BEACH, AUGUST 6 - 9, 2014**

Tom Gill, Virginia Beach, VA

It promises to be a week to remember as the Virginia Beach Lifeguard Association (VBLA), USLA, Nautica and city of Virginia Beach team up to present the Nautica USLA National Lifeguard Championships and a National Lifeguard Alumni Reunion honoring USLA's 50th Anniversary. The 4 day event will offer something for everyone. Lifeguard Alumni groups are invited to share their lifesaving history as the Old Coast Guard Station hosts a special exhibit devoted to 50 years of USLA.

The National Junior Lifeguard Championship will lead off the event on Wednesday, August 6, as hundreds of junior guards from all over the country showcase their skills learned in junior lifeguard programs during the summer.

Following the JG Championship, all of the JGs, Lifeguard competitors, officials and alumni will parade down the famous Virginia Beach Boardwalk to the 24th Street Park for a welcome ceremony. And to top off day one, fireworks will light up the night.

On Thursday the Lifeguard competitors will begin their quest for individual and team titles. It will take three days to determine national champions in 14 events spanning open and age group competitors. After each championship final, medalists will be invited to the Medals Beach to receive their medals while family, friends, teammates and media honor the newly crowned champions.

Following the action on Thursday, a party for competitors open to the public will be held at the 31st Street Park under the watchful eye of Virginia Beach's 34 foot statue of King Neptune. On Friday, the USLA 50th Anniversary Muster will be held at the Old Coast Guard Station on 24th Street. Alumni, competitors, officials, friends and families are invited to view the special exhibit honoring 50 Years of the USLA while enjoying food and beverages (admission fee).

On Saturday, the top scoring teams and individuals will be crowned on the beach immediately following the competition. Special post event awards parties will be held giving competitors VIP treatment at the hottest clubs on the beach.

Make sure to visit the USLA National Championships Page at [usla.org/nationals](http://usla.org/nationals) and the 2014 Nautica USLA National Championships Facebook Page for the latest information concerning everything Nationals related and access to online registration. Remember that all USLA active, alumni and junior members currently registered with the USLA are invited to compete regardless of participation in local or regional competitions. The 2014 Nautica USLA Nationals in Virginia Beach are ready for you this summer, are you ready for Virginia Beach?

**The USLA has arranged for deep discounts and special deals with leading companies that offer products of value to USLA members. Visit the USLA Home page (at the bottom) or the USLA Store, at: [www.usla.org/store](http://www.usla.org/store)**

**Example discounts available to you:**

- 25-50% off Hobie polarized sunglasses (including special deals on prescription sunglasses)
- \$30 off DaFin swim fins
- Special discounts on Ford automobiles.

**As well, lifeguards, chapters, and regions can purchase clothing and other items with the USLA logo embroidered on them at Uniserv GuardGear. And you can purchase rings with the USLA logo from Jostens.**

**The USLA is committed to helping lifeguards get the best equipment at the best prices. Don't forget to sign up for your membership today through your chapter or at: [www.usla.org](http://www.usla.org)**

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## JUNIOR GUARD SYMPOSIUM

Jo Wagenhals, Pompano Beach, FL

This spring Miami Beach Ocean Rescue and the Pompano Beach Lifesaving Association hosted the first junior lifeguard symposium in the picturesque South Beach section of Miami Beach. Day 1 opened with Miami Beach Ocean Rescue Lt. William "Mac" MacDonald and Beach Operations Supervisor Scott Reynolds along with USLA SER president Gerry Falconer welcoming the attendees. A visit by the newly elected Miami Beach Mayor, Philip Levine, and new Fire Chief, Virgil Fernandez, both in their first week was a tremendous showing of support by Miami Beach officials. Necessity is the mother of invention and this adage couldn't be more evident than in the span of programs to educate our youth on beach safety.

Miami Beach Ocean Rescue, anxious to restart a junior lifeguard program that had fallen to the wayside, had a few presenters. Bill Geddes spoke of great fundraising accomplishments from the local USLA. He also perked up some ears when he spoke of his intensive talks with a local school. The school administration and the parents are extremely motivated to introduce water safety and other water related programs into the their curriculum next year. Lt. Leigh Emerson-Smith presented on the advocacy of Surfrider Foundation and encouraged all those involved with the ocean to join in the cause and be a part of the solution not the problem. In the absence of a junior lifeguard program, Lucas Bocanegra created an extremely informative presentation on beach safety that he takes to area schools complete with a morning catch of the sea-pest of the day (jellyfish or man-o-war) for the kids to see firsthand. He's also created very specific maps in both Spanish and English to identify each tower location by photo and various beach entrances to decrease the number of lost children (and parents for that matter).

Pompano Beach Ocean Rescue did a quick review of their summer program



of 200+ youth. Chris Nowviskie highlighted the incorporation of the Florida State Warning Flag System to represent various age groups. Jo Wagenhals then reviewed some of the aspects of programs that concern administrators. Pompano Beach Junior Lifeguard Parents Association Inc.'s Mark Kersey and Nemia Schulte spoke on the advantages of a parents association to squash small problems, raise funds, and generate cohesiveness among children and

their families. Chris Nowviskie also presented Gary Wise of South Walton Fire District's program mirrored off the ILS system and asked for a show of support in presenting this at the upcoming USLA SER Regional Board of Directors Meeting. Tony Landrua gave us an update on the advancement of lifeguards in Puerto Rico and the next phase of drowning prevention on the island: establishing junior lifeguard programs.

The most recent Florida Beach Patrol Chiefs Association Beach Patrol of the Year recipient, Brevard County Ocean Rescue has made vast improvements since the 2008 Aquatic Assessment with the addition full time guards, lifeguard towers, and all the support apparatus but unfortunately has no junior lifeguard program to date. Enterprising local

and mother of five, Vanessa Ziade, took it upon herself to start a program following the USLA guidelines: Space Coast Youth Multisports. Ms. Ziade played a video showcasing her campers. It's apparent she has all the bases covered as the kids learn about beach flora and fauna as well as have weekly junior lifeguard competitions. All athletes are insured through the Amateur Athletic Union.

Last, but not least, was Tom Gillin of Flagler Beach (not to be confused with Tom Gill of Virginia Beach) presented on Flagler Beach's 8 week program for area children that flip flops back and forth week by week between proper junior lifeguard camp and a few weeks of surf & kayak camp as



well as a beach camp which unlike most camps does not have a swimming proficiency requirement. This unorthodox approach was a true eye opener as the opportunity for non-swimmers to come to the beach and learn about the warning flags, tides, and flora & fauna was in my opinion revolutionary. If surf conditions were anything but calm, campers in the Beach Camp went to calm waters on the intracoastal side of the barrier island to then

snorkel in the shallows. This gets non-swimmers face in the water, then gets them horizontal with or without fins. Sound like the steps in learning to swim? I thought so too. Bravo to Flagler Beach's Tom Gillin for advocating this breakthrough and increasing beach safety knowledge to those who truly need it.

Carlos Macias of Wavejet Propulsion brought the 11'0" Rescue Board marketed specifically to lifeguards for demonstration and marked as such. Of the quiver of 11 available the "Lifeguard" board has graciously been loaned out for demonstration several

times within the (USLA) Southeast Region.

Others in attendance were Lantana Marine Safety's George Klein and Chris Redgate looking to restart their program, Miami Beach Ocean Rescue's Richard McKinnon (pictured with Mayor Philip Levine), Rafael Reig, and Dirk Winkler who created the agency's webpage along with other amazing graphic design work, as well as area parent from the Mater Beach Academy on Miami Beach, Jacqueline Doulis, who is hoping to incorporate surf life-saving related curriculum to her school as they have in her native homeland, Australia.



We all have Tom O'Neill who works both Pompano Beach Ocean Rescue and Miami Beach Ocean Rescue a debt of gratitude as he thought of this symposium on a whim while fielding phone calls in the office. The sharing of ideas not only relays what works and what doesn't it also sparks new ideas.



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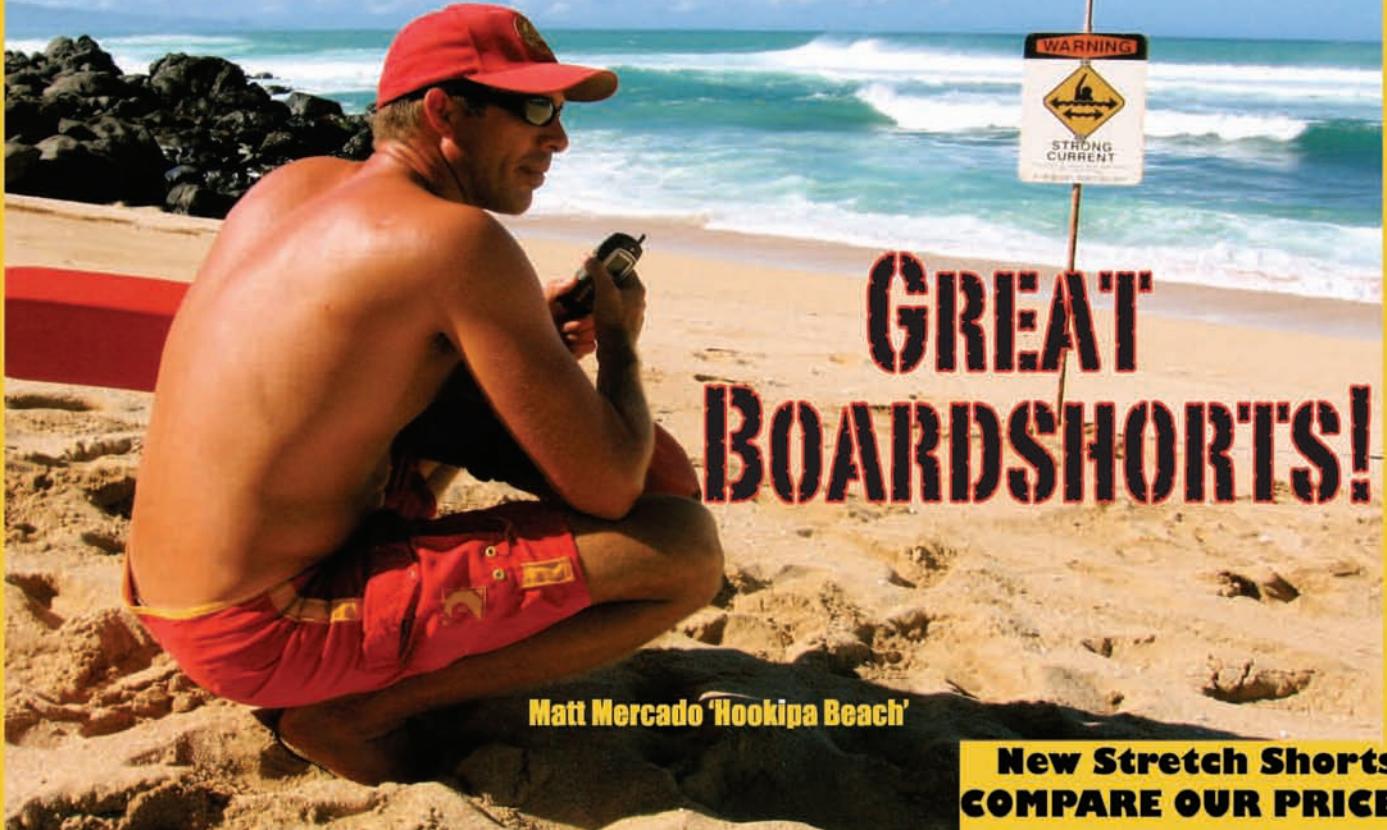
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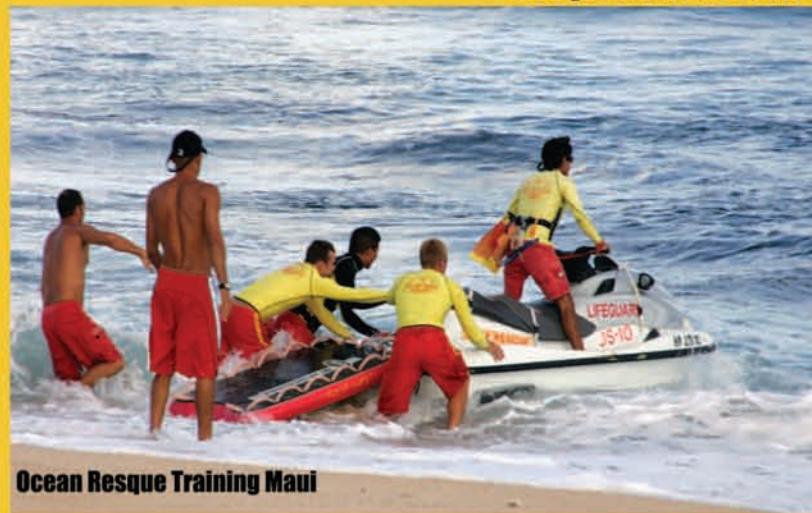
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# LAKWOOD TEEN CAUGHT IN RIP CURRENT DROWNS AT SUNSET BEACH, HUNTINGTON BEACH, CA

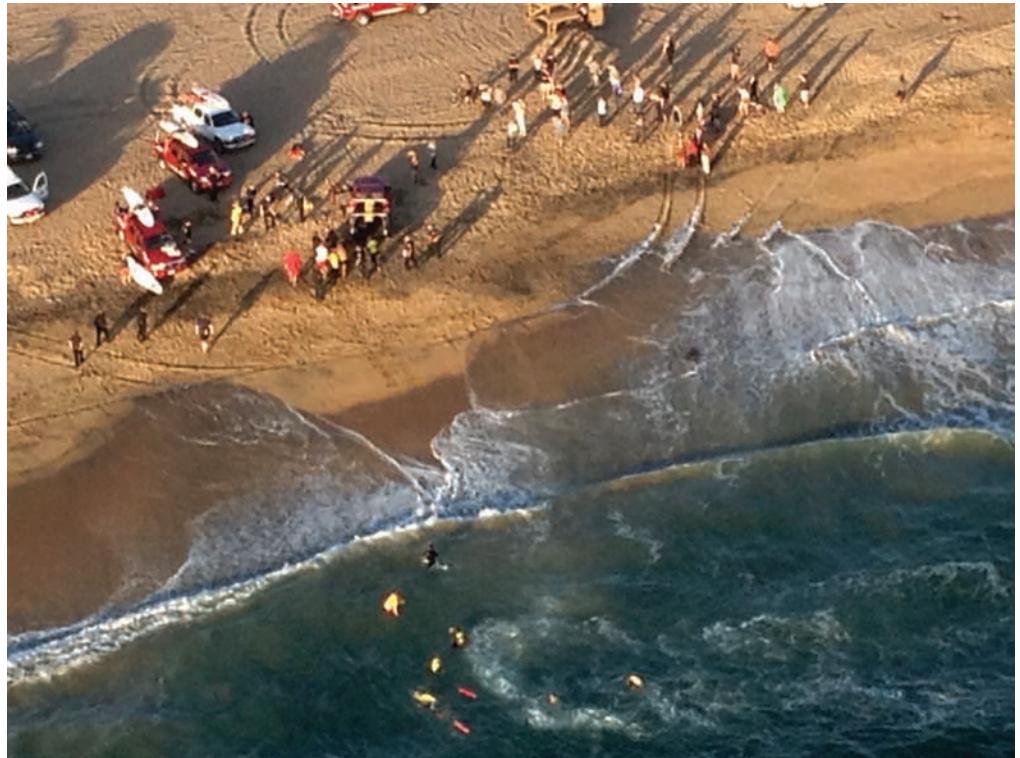
Phillip Zonkel, Reprint with permission, Daily Breeze

A Lakewood man drowned in the ocean after being caught in a powerful rip current near Sunset Beach, authorities said Tuesday.

Damian Frierson Jr., 19, was found floating 11 feet beneath the surface of the water about 6:30 p.m. Monday near Pacific Coast Highway and Anderson Street and died about two hours later at Huntington Beach Hospital, according to the Orange County Sheriff's Department Coroner Division.

About 45 minutes earlier, a lifeguard, who was making beach patrols after the lifeguard tower had closed at 5 p.m., had warned Frierson and two female swimmers to stay out of the water due to a dangerous rip current, said Lt. Mike Beuerlein of the Huntington Beach Fire Department's Marine Safety Division.

"The lifeguard told them to get out of the water and then advised them of the rip current in the area and suggested they stay out of the water," he said.



The lifeguard returned about 10 minutes later and saw one of the women standing on shore and yelling that her friend was in trouble. The lifeguard saw Frierson struggling at the head of the rip current, while the other female swimmer made her way to shore, Beuerlein said.

The lifeguard took a paddle board into the ocean but lost sight of Frierson. The lifeguard went back to shore and radioed for help and then continued looking for Frierson, Beuerlein said.

About 25 additional lifeguards from Huntington Beach, Seal Beach and Bolsa Chica and a waverunner and helicopter assisted in the search, he said.

Frierson was found unconscious about 15 feet away from where he was last spotted. Lifeguards pulled him onto the waverunner and performed CPR on him before he was taken by Huntington Beach Fire Department paramedics to the hospital, Beuerlein said.



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# USLA AGENCY PROFILE:

## Charleston County Park and Recreation



**USLA certified agency since year:** 1994

**Basic or Advanced:** Basic

**Affiliated USLA chapter name:** Charleston County

**Year agency was founded:**

Our agency was founded in 1968 and we began lifeguard services in 1978

**Describe agency(government/department):**

The Charleston County Park, Recreation and Tourist Commission was created in 1968 as a county special purpose

district. As of June 2013, we employ 907 employees (176 full-time and 731 part-time) and a varying number of volunteers. The organizational structure consists of seven appointed commissioners, an Executive Director, Chief Operating Officer, Superintendent of Administrative Services (HR, Finance, Maintenance, Information Technology, and Capital Projects), a Superintendent of Park and Recreation Services (Marketing, Recreation, Parks, Safety, and Parks and Program Services), and a Planning Division for future park acquisition and development. The commission has formed a number of partnerships with educational, medical, recreational, governmental and business entities throughout Charleston County in order to maximize the range of product and services we offer to the community.

CCPRC offers park and recreation opportunities to over 665,000 residents of Charleston, Dorchester and Berkeley counties and to millions of tourists visiting the Lowcountry each year. The agency's goal is to promote healthy active lifestyles and connect people to nature while bringing awareness about the historical and cultural significance of the area. The permanent facilities that we own and manage include parks, beaches, fishing piers, boat landings, waterparks, a marina, a campground and cottages, and other rental facil-

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ties. In addition, we offer a wide range of programs consisting of summer camps, educational and recreational courses, festivities, concerts, races and other sports activities.

Our Ocean Rescue program operates within the Parks Division with assistance from our Safety team.

#### **Annual operating budget:**

Charleston County Park and Recreation Commission receives 53% of our total income from Charleston County residents in taxes. The other 47% of the total revenue is collected from recreational programming fees, admissions, facility/fleet rentals, over-night rentals, concessions, sundry resale, water parks, Holiday Festival of Lights, and special events. Our total budget for FY 2013-2014 is \$40,779,910. The budget for our Ocean Rescue Program including our Junior Lifeguard Program is approximately \$500,000.

#### **Describe community (population/hotels/attractions):**

Charleston County has approximately 665,000 residents and attracts over 4 million visitors interested in the historic district and local beaches. Charleston has been named the top U.S. travel destination by Conde Nast Traveler for the past 3 years, Top City in the U.S. and Canada by Travel + Leisure 2013 and Beachwalker Park on Kiawah Island has been named as one of the top 10 beaches in America for several years. There are not many hotels directly on the beach; there are mainly single family houses and rentals.

#### **Seasonal or year round operation:**

Seasonal beginning in May and running through the end of September.

#### **Hours of operation:**

Water observation from 10 AM to 6:30 PM

#### **Describe jurisdiction (area/miles):**

Charleston County Beaches are a series of barrier islands: Edisto Island, Seabrook Island, Kiawah Island, Folly Beach, Sullivans Island and the Isle of Palms. With the exception of Kiawah Beach Patrol, Charleston County Parks provides the only life-guard coverage for Charleston County beaches. We guard in areas where we operate county parks: Beachwalker Park on Kiawah Island, Folly Beach County Park and the Commercial District of Folly Beach and Isle of Palms County Park. Total coverage is approximately 2 miles between the three islands.

**Describe geography of beach/shoreline/hazards/surf/temps:**  
Average air temperature is 79 degrees in May to a high of 88 degrees in July.

Average water temperatures range from 70 degrees in May up to 85 in July and August.

The beaches in the area are flat with an average tide change of six feet. The area is also highly susceptible to erosion. A terminal groin was installed at the West end of Folly Beach County Park in 2013 to stabilize Folly Island. Two of the guarded areas include fishing piers. Two of the areas are also close to inlets. The water is murky making search efforts more difficult.

#### **Average annual beach attendance/rescues/PAs/medical aids/other statistics:**

Average attendance in the guarded areas is approximately 335,000. In 2013 we performed 59 rescues, 9115 preventative actions, 3993 medical aids and 240 found patrons.

*continued on page 27*

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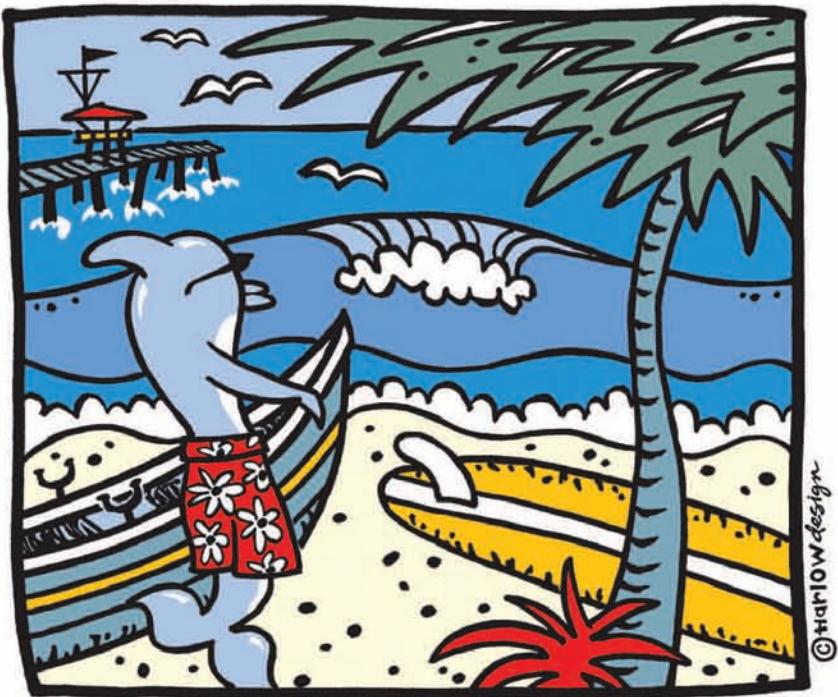
Julia Leo, Ocean Rescue Captain  
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**SAN CLEMENTE OCEAN FESTIVAL MISSION STATEMENT**

San Clemente Ocean Festival is a volunteer non-profit organization (501c4), dedicated to the promotion and support of ocean safety the environment and the community by providing a quality athletic venue and an enjoyable family event.

A portion of proceeds from the San Clemente Ocean Festival directly benefits the United States Lifeguard Association (USLA).

For more information and registration visit: [www.oceanfestival.org](http://www.oceanfestival.org)  
or call: 949-440-6141

**Saturday July 19**

**Orange County Lifeguard Games**

- Overall Point Competition
- Surf Race
- 10'6" Paddleboard Cross (heats, consolation & finals)
- 12'6 Sport of Kings SUPCross (heats, consolation & finals)
- 2 Person Rescue Relay (swimmer w/fins, victim)
- Surf Ski Race (USLA spec.)
- National Doryman's Association Races (3 lap races)
- Paddleboard Rescue Relay (USLA 10'6" spec., two person)
- International Ironman (swim, surf ski, paddleboard)
- American Ironman (dory, swim, paddleboard)
- American Ironwoman (run, swim, paddleboard)

**Saturday July 20**

- 5km Beach Run
- Biathlon (1km swim, 5km run)
- 10km Open Ocean Paddle Race (SUP, paddleboard, surf ski)
- One Mile Ocean Swim
- Kid's SUP Races
- Run-Swim-Run
- Dash & Splash 2 Person Relay (runner, swimmer)



**Mission Statement is:**

The Charleston County Park and Recreation Commission will improve the quality of life in Charleston County by offering a diverse system of park facilities, programs and services.

**Describe agency's operational philosophy:**

CCPRC is committed to a set of Core Values that we operate off of. These eleven values ensure that we preserve our cultural, historical, and natural resources in our thriving park system for years to come: Community Enrichment, Leadership, Fun, Exceptional Customer Service, Health and Wellness, Quality, Diversity, Safety Accessibility, Stewardship, Building a Legacy.

**List facilities & inventories (type of buildings, # of towers/vehicles/vessels, etc.):**

Each facility has an equipment and first aid room

15 seasonal stands

2 Ford Rescue Vehicles

4 Bobcat/John Deere Gators with medbed

2 Personal Watercraft

**Describe agency staffing (# of FT/PT, seasonal/ permanent, ranks, pay range for each):**

2 full-time Safety Managers

4 full-time Park Managers – oversee a number of other duties including park operations and in the off-season are involved in a number of other operations

1 Aquatics Aide - \$15/hour

8 Junior Lifeguard Instructors - \$12/hour

10 Lifeguard Supervisors – \$13.70

65 Lifeguards - \$11.70

**Describe function and basic services provided:**

Lifeguard responsibilities include water rescue and emergency medical response on and around the beach and park facilities. As part of our program, all lifeguards and supervisors receive Emergency Medical Responder training.

**Mutual aid agreements:**

CCPRC works closely with each municipality where we provide services; Kiawah Island Beach Patrol, Folly Beach Public Safety and Isle of Palms Fire Department. In addition we participate in events and train with Charleston County Rescue, Charleston County EMS and the Coast Guard.

**List special beach events:**

Kiawah Island Golf Resort Triathlon, Surfers Healing Folly Beach

We also provide lifeguard services for Eastern Surfing Association events on Folly Beach, Lowcountry Splash (a 5 mile open water swim in Charleston Harbor), Swim Around Charleston (a 12 mile open water swim in Charleston harbor and waterways), and various stand up paddle events.

**Junior Lifeguard Program overview:**

Started in 1998 as a one week program, we have now expanded to multiple sessions at two of our sites. Our junior program is broken down into one week sessions for the following age groups: 10-11, 12-13, 14-15. We also offer a two week "Advanced" session for 15-16 year olds that includes American Red Cross Lifeguard certification. The one week sessions focus on education, fitness and teamwork. All sessions include a day at one of our waterparks to familiarize participants with the job of a lifeguard in a different environment than the beach. The final day of the program always includes a competition and awards ceremony for family to attend. Last year we have approximately 125 participants and we are also recognized as a USLA Gold Seal Program. The program has been an excellent feeder program for our ocean rescue as well as our waterpark lifeguards.

**List active USLA members and roles they serve:**

Nikki Bowie, National Secretary; Adrienne Groh, National Heroic Acts Committee Chairperson.

**List USLA awards to agency or members**

**(National Awards Program, heroic act medals):**

USLA Beach Safety Challenge Award 2009 to present; National Lifesaving Award 2009

**Additional information you wish to offer:**

During the school year we implement our SHARKs (Safety, Health and Aquatic Rescue for Kids) program in Charleston County after-school programs. This is a 1 hour program aimed at basic water safety education. We are able to see close to 1000 children ages 5 to 12.

A few years ago we were approached by Community Services of Edisto to help them find a way to provide basic swim lessons to children on Edisto Island. Edisto is a fairly rural area that has no public swimming pools



and is surrounded by several bodies of water. There are several drownings a year in this area and most of the population does not have the means to take swim lessons. Steve Austin of CSE was very passionate about bringing these services to the area and fabricated a portable pool based on designs he researched from LA County and San Diego. He donated the pool to CCPRC with the stipulation that we provide lessons to Jane Edwards Elementary every year. The pool is 16ft. X 24ft. and we are able to drain the pool, disassemble and move to other sites in the rural areas of Charleston County. In our first season last summer we were able to visit 3 additional sites and also utilized one of our waterparks outside operating hours to bring lessons to over 300 children.

**Completed by member name:** Nikki Bowie

# RESCUERS REVIEW POLICY AFTER BOOGIE BOARDER'S DEATH IN SANTA CRUZ

Reprint with permission, Santa Cruz Sentinel

SANTA CRUZ -- Santa Cruz Fire Department leaders reviewed the agency's water rescue policy Monday after a 46-year-old bodyboarder declined help and was killed after being dashed against rocks in 10-foot surf.

"We're definitely critiquing ourselves and thinking what we could have done differently," said Battalion Chief Mike Venezio.

Venezio said lifeguards now are allowed to close beaches to swimmers and surfers entirely on days with large and dangerous surf, but city law is not clear when it comes to whether individual people in the water can be yanked out against their will.

"We're trying to abide by that and still not violate their rights," Venezio said.

He expected to get more legal clarity Tuesday.

The problem came to light about 4:30 p.m. Friday, when 46-year-old James Zenk of Mountain View was on a bodyboard wearing a wetsuit and fins near Its Beach.

The surf was in the 10- to 12-foot range with bigger sets, and Zenk had been spotted drifting between Its and Steamer Lane in an area called the "toilet bowl" where water surges and slams against rocks.

A few dozen people watched him from the cliff.

Santa Cruz Fire rescue swimmers on two rescue skis were already patrolling the water because of the large surf, high tide and sunny conditions, said marine rescue captain Josh Coleman.

When people on the cliff reported Zenk, they found him near Its and talked to him. Zenk told them he was OK. The ski team stayed with him for a few minutes anyway, then started back to the Santa Cruz Municipal Wharf. Then, "a huge set sucked him toward the toilet bowl," Venezio said.

Zenk was dashed against the rocks. Two rescue swimmers -- a man and a woman -- dived in with swim fins,

helmets and flotation devices to save him.

Another set of waves came and the rescue swimmers too were smacked against the rocks. With more than a foot of foam on the water's surface, the swimmers struggled to breathe and feared for their own lives, Venezio said.

"They actually thought they weren't going to make it out," said Venezio.

Coleman said, "We have to commend our guys and gals that went in. That's a terrible spot."

One rescue swimmer made it back to the ski and another was picked up by a ski driver, he said.

Two more rescue swimmers then went after Zenk and brought him back to the ski. He was taken to Cowell Beach, where he was given CPR.

Zenk was then transported by ambulance to Dominican Hospital where he died, according to firefighters.

The two swimmers also were treated for minor injuries at the hospital.

Since the rescue happened when dozens of people were on the cliff, some questioned whether lifeguards should have grabbed Zenk earlier.

"Since rescue workers have the responsibility to help in dangerous situations, shouldn't they also have the authority to order people to leave a dangerous situation?" asked Santa Cruz resident Ann Bodine, in an email to the Sentinel.

"We came very close to a triple tragedy, with two rescue swimmers crashing perilously into rocks while trying to save the man."

Venezio said they were looking at rules in Hawaii, where lifeguards in some areas can rescue people even if they decline to be helped. He said Friday's case was unfortunate.

"We're just looking at options of how we can do business better," he said. "We can only do so much advising and warning."

# THE ORIGIN AND HISTORY OF THE JUNIOR LIFEGUARD PROGRAMS NATIONALLY AND INTERNATIONALLY

Bob Burnside, LA County, CA

## Part 3: South Africa

### Where and when did it all begin?

In 1969 the first nipper squad was formed at Pirates Surf Lifesaving Club and was also the start of the first Basic Nipper Course, designed to teach young boys and girls the fundamental principles of surf safety. The first Basic Course for the Nippers attracted a total of 200 youngsters, eager to learn.

On completion of the course, the Nippers were examined and successful candidates received a certificate and a badge. This entitled them to enter the Intermediate and Advanced courses. After successfully completing all three courses, at age 15 they are then able to train to become Junior Lifesavers and can begin doing patrol duty on beaches.

Lifesaving South Africa's Nipper movement was founded in 1972. Surf Nippers now boasts a membership of over 1200. Stillwater Nippers started in 1994 and has over 500 members. The Nipper activities have become one of the most successful child development and sporting programs within South Africa.

The important prerequisite to remember is that Clubs do not undertake to teach the "Nippers" basic swimming. On joining they are tested on their swimming ability and then encouraged to join swimming clubs in order to improve themselves.

The Lifesaving Clubs' main function is to teach the youngster respect for the water and give them confidence in the aquatic environment (especially the sea). No Nipper, however, is allowed to be part of the voluntary patrols, which do duty on our beaches.

By having the Nipper Sections in our movement, a greater parental interest has developed and parents are often involved in the fundraising and administrative duties of the clubs. The Nipper movement is completely voluntary and relies on public contributors to cover all expenses.

## Part 4: Australia

### Where and when did it all begin?

### "Nippers" in surf life saving"

In response to declining membership lists and deteriorating club life in the mid and late 1960's, many clubs launched recruitment campaigns aimed at a new category of member, pre-adolescents known as 'nippers'.

Clubs believed that nippers would graduate into active members and, with more sporting experience, improve their competitive profiles. Youth sections actually have a long history in the movement – Cottesloe recruited sub-juniors (juveniles) in the 1930's and a number of clubs followed suit in the 1950's – but

the nipper program in the 1960's was far more extensive and actively encouraged by senior SLSA officials.

These days' junior activities continue to grow at such a rate that some clubs have even had to cap their numbers to be able to cope. The focus of nippers has changed over the last decade from what was a more competitive focus to more of a balance between lifesaving and competition.

Of SLSA's almost 140,000 members, almost 50,000 are nippers (5-13 years). This is roughly 36% of our total membership and shows just how significant the junior movement is within Australian surf life saving. The nippers of today are the future of surf life saving, and this is not lost on the thousands of volunteer Age Managers that provide support and instruction in junior programs during the summer.

## Part 5: New Zealand

### Where and when did it all begin?

### "Junior/Nipper Program"

Youth Training Program was formed in the 1940's at Canterbury, North Beach Surf Lifesaving Club, South Island, New Zealand. This was a basic course which trained younger men to prepare for summer volunteer work with the surf club.

In the 1960's, at South Brighton and Mount Maunganui Surf Clubs, the first true "Nipper" program was established.

New Zealand Surf Lifesaving Association's National Body, then established a National Program for all Clubs to embrace in 1981.

It was derived from a lifeguard manual that John Thomas wrote on his return from the first lifeguard exchange program between California and the Auckland Surf Life Saving Association.

This program was initially developed by Peter Fitzsimmons and was known as the Metropolitan Life Assurance Youth Training Scheme.

Mr. Jim Campbell, was appointed to coordinate and promote the project. By 1985, New Zealand had over 2000 Nippers. Competition for these youngsters, was not allowed until they reached the age of 14 years, thus ensuring that basic skills in water safety would be the main focal point.

The history of the New Zealand programs, have been published by Ivan Jackson, author, in his book, "The Sand Between My Toes."

New Zealand's Nipper program continues to grow rapidly with each passing year and has, like so many others, joined the community even closer to the Surf Lifesaving Movement and awareness of water safety.

# CODE X - A HISTORY

B. Chris Brewster, San Diego, CA

If you've been trained using Open Water Lifesaving – The United States Lifesaving Association Manual you're familiar with the Code X protocol for search and recovery. There's even a DVD on the USLA website for training. But where did Code X originate?

One spring day in San Diego in 1982 Lt. Frank Day assigned lifeguard Tom Harvey and me to take a lifeguard vehicle from Mission Beach to South Mission Beach. In those days our lifeguard service was not authorized to staff the main (two story) tower at South Mission Beach, except in summer, due to budget restrictions. As I recall it was a sunny day, with 4 – 6 foot surf and a substantial water crowd.

We were to sit in the vehicle as a mostly stationary patrol, watch the water and respond as needed. It was not an ideal situation because from that height our view of the crowd was intermittently obstructed by the surf. The alternative though, was to have no lifeguard there at all.

After an hour or so we spotted a swimmer in difficulty and Harvey went in with buoy and fins to make what we imagined would be a routine rescue. I stayed at the vehicle, reporting via radio that there was one lifeguard in the water on a rescue. I watched him go out, while keeping an eye on the rest of the crowd in case of another problem. I could only see Harvey irregularly between the waves, but at some point I realized he was outside the surfline with no victim, seemingly confused and swimming in different directions. What was going on?

Then I saw him raise an arm – the signal for "lifeguard needs assistance." I radioed to the Mission Beach tower, about ¾ of a mile north that Harvey was requesting help and I headed into the water with buoy and fins. Backup was sent. Once I got to Harvey he told me the victim had disappeared as he was swimming out for the rescue. He was missing. We dove a couple of times and found nothing. Now I realized a full search was needed, but there was no way to communicate that to shore.

I told Harvey to keep searching and swam in to advise the responding backup lifeguard that we had a missing victim. He radioed in to initiate a full search and rescue response. I headed back out to continue the search with Harvey. Eventually a full search was conducted for an hour, according to our protocol, but the victim wasn't found.

The body was recovered days later and I was left to ponder, what if my fellow lifeguard had been able to let me know



right away that the victim was missing? What if I could have radioed that information before going in the water? What if a full search response had started before I left the beach? Would the victim have been found?

I was hired as a summer lifeguard in San Diego in 1979 while working winters at the Vail ski area. I started working as a professional ski patrolman there in 1981 and continued

through 1985, moving between ski patrolling and lifeguarding every six months. There were many similarities between the jobs, including the quick, individual actions that were often required in both professions to save lives and treat injuries. I learned from each and applied what I learned to both.

Perhaps the greatest emergency faced in the lifeguard profession is a missing swimmer. In the early days I was very occasionally called upon to be a member of a search and rescue team, or simply heard the drama unfold on the two-way radio. One of the things I noted was that in these rare instances the many potential elements of a successful search and rescue response were left to the split second decisions of first line supervisors, under great duress.

We had many potential items to draw from in our toolkit. We could call upon helicopters from various agencies to search overhead. We could respond multiple lifeguard vessels of varying sizes and capabilities. We could assemble our dive team. We could summon paramedics to stand by on-scene in case of a recovery. We could enlist police for crowd control. We could dispatch lifeguards from adjacent districts to help with the in-water search. And so on. But remembering, prioritizing and organizing them all takes experience and time.

With all that was going on in these cases the radio would quickly become clogged with requests, recommendations, and basic logistics inquiries. The on-scene supervisor had to juggle it all in the short time available to find and resuscitate a viable victim. It could be overwhelming. And there was no incident command system back then. Just rank, to determine who would lead.

Once the effort was over, successful or not, there were inevitably reviews, formal and informal, in which some component of the response was faulted. But it was hard to fault that single supervisor under great stress juggling multiple options in the breach.

For the Vail Ski Patrol there was a somewhat similar problem, exacerbated by gravity. Once you send ski patrollers downhill, they can't quickly return to the top of the moun-

tain for specialized rescue or medical supplies. So you need to dispatch personnel from the top of the mountain very strategically with all the equipment needed for the incident. That's especially true for the most severe incidents – heart attacks, avalanches, and ski lift evacuations – all of which require special equipment and extra personnel.

Patrollers long before my time had, through trial and error, come up with a simple solution. They'd created a prioritized checklist with each and every step the patrollers assigned to dispatching that day would need to consider, in order of priority, in these most serious of emergencies. Not every item on the checklist would be needed in each instance, but the checklist at least ensured that every option was considered and every appropriate and available resource could be sent. It worked very well. I experienced it while serving as a patrol dispatcher (we traded off) and as a responder. And while every emergency was different, rarely were critical options overlooked.

All of this got me wondering if we couldn't use a similar approach for our missing swimmer responses. And I couldn't get that problem with Tom Harvey out of my mind – offshore with no way to signal back what had happened.

We had a signal for "lifeguard needs assistance" (a raised arm), for "resuscitation case" (a waved arm), and for "OK" or "no further assistance needed" (arms overhead in a circle or one hand touching the crown of the head). We needed something clearly different and visible for a long distance. And so I thought, why not an X – as in X marks the spot of the missing person? Fortunately as well, while there were many codes used in radio communication I knew of no "Code X." It was unique, as it needed to be.

After mulling it over a little more, in October of 1982 just before leaving for another winter of ski patrolling I sent a three page typed memorandum to lifeguard Captain William Norton entitled, "Code X Proposal." (You can find that memo in the Lifeguard Library on [www.usla.org](http://www.usla.org) or at: [www.usla.org/codexmemo](http://www.usla.org/codexmemo).)

It started, "It is the objective of this plan to provide a comprehensive prearranged system for dealing with attempts to recover drowning victims. This plan will be titled Code X to coincide with a new arm signal which will allow the lifeguard in the water to communicate to those on the beach that the victim has submerged and can no longer be found."

The proposal went on to detail a recommended set of protocols when this signal was received or if a lifeguard on the beach received a credible report of a missing swimmer. Attached was a draft dispatch sheet with a time to log each item the dispatcher accomplished, much like the ones the Vail Ski Patrol used. The plan also included certain automatic response protocols (e.g. summon paramedics to stand-by) so that there would be no need to add radio traffic to accomplish them.

Each of the various resources was listed: lifeguards, harbor patrol, rescue boats, helicopters, paramedics, air ambulance, police, etc. As well, steps like announcing the incident on the radio and directing that radio traffic be limited to emergency communication were part of the listed protocols.

I realized it might be awhile (if ever) before our management responded to the recommendations of a very junior member of the team. Indeed it did take awhile and there was a certain amount of grumbling about the rookie lifeguard being the tail wagging the dog; but eventually, and I don't remember when, the plan was adopted. It was tested in real incidents, edited and updated to address shortcomings, honed to a reliable standard, and sat where it belonged on a clipboard in our 24-hour dispatch center, awaiting the dreaded call of the next Code X.

This tidy plan might have been one of those unique protocols of a single lifeguard agency but for my appointment in 1993 by USLA President Bill Richardson to chair the USLA Textbook Committee. We really had no USLA training manual at the time, except for Lifesaving and Marine Safety, an initial effort from over a decade earlier.

We secured a publisher who gave us a monetary advance that was enough to fund travel for a volunteer representative from every region of the USLA, plus our Medical Advisor. We spent five wintry days in a Chicago hotel room going through everything we thought belonged in the new USLA manual. There was plenty of give and take, along with very spirited dialog. Among other things we learned from each other how differently beach lifeguarding was being done in different parts of the country. Protocols and standards made their way into the manual based on consensus or at least majority vote.

Code X made it. I don't recall the discussion or the vote, but it has been part of the USLA's official protocols ever since that first version of the new manual was published in 1995.

In 2008, San Diego Lt. Nick Lerma, recognizing that some training videos were needed for Code X and other key subject areas, negotiated with a film company producing reality television shows featuring lifeguards in action. They owed the City of San Diego some training videos as part of their contract and Lerma used that obligation to arrange for them to produce a Code X training video for the USLA. It was masterfully done based on an actual Code X incident in Huntington Beach. You can order a copy from the Training and Certification section of [www.usla.org](http://www.usla.org).

And so a protocol that originated in part in another profession became a standard for American lifeguarding. It was born out of a desire to speed lifeguards and support to a missing swimmer, but reached wide acceptance only through the professional exchange that is the United States Lifesaving Association. If your organization doesn't use Code X, I'd recommend taking a look. It's a great way to preplan for the most serious emergency you are likely to face. It is but one example of how together we develop standards that make a difference.



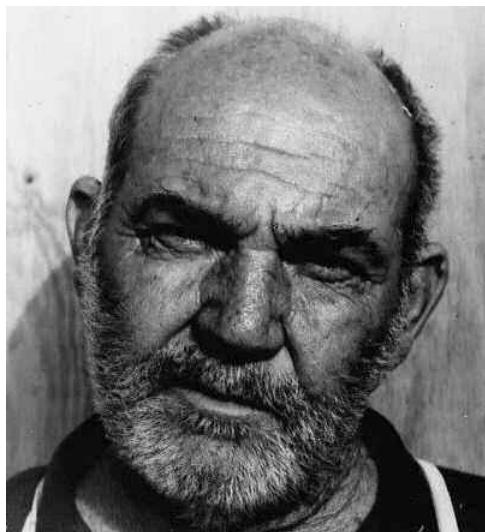
Lifeguards Bud Higgins and Gene Belshe pose with rescue boards, circa 1932



Malibu 1955



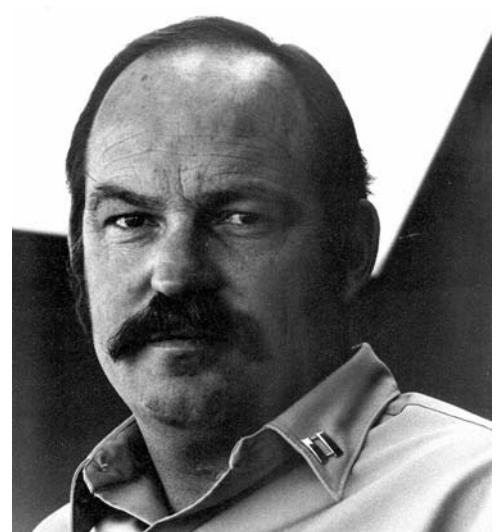
There are some lifeguarding legends in this epic from a banquet in Sydney in 1967. That's an ice carving as a center piece - an Australian lifesaver and his "reel". A great trip with great people - representing the U.S.A.: Chief Bud Stevenson, Chief Myron Cox, Paul Matthies, Jim Richards, Bob Burnside (manager), Rudy Kroon (coach), Joe Metzger, Jerry Bennette, Paul Cohee, John Helland, Jerry McGraw, Doug Jensen, Spike Beck, Brian (Bi) Gerold, George Lowerre, Eric Arneson, Ray Bray, Alex Nordholm, Howard Henderson, Larry Haines. Aussies: Ken Watson (left with trophy), Judge Curlewis (directly in front of Matthies), an Executive from Speedo Swimwear Australia (tan suit)



Bud Stevenson



Santa Monica lifeguards



Don Rohrer

....comments made to the 1st. SLSA meeting, fall 1963.

I have asked you to, attend this meeting to discuss a concept of establishing a National lifeguard association, patterned after the Australian Lifeguard Associations structure...as discussed with you on the phone.

There are some who might consider this to be impossible.

Yet one day, someone will find a way to accomplish this....So why not we that sit here tonight.

Once it is shown, that someone or some group, is moving to forward to this concept....others will suddenly be able to invasion this concept and wish to be part of that vision.

Before long, not only will it no longer be impossible, it will be commonplace.

Many of the things we now take for granted...were once considered to be completely impossible.

Thankfully, there were innovative and visionary men who didn't let that stop them. Look at how far our profession has progress over the last 5 years.

Often when something appears impossible..it is because it is viewed from a "limited" perspective...Lifeguards throughout our country share the same basic concerns and love as we on the west coast do.

If we change our territorial perceptions and open our minds ...dare to dream what may seem to be an impossible task...This vision of a National Lifeguard association that we will discuss tonight...CAN BECOME A REALITY!

Bob Burnside



....AND again to the 1st Mexican delegates, 2004, Galveston, Texas



READY FOR TRIP—To Australia to represent United States in International Surf Carnival are members of the Los Angeles County Lifeguard team. Back row (left to right): Tom Hilt, Howard Barthel, Chick McIlroy, Bob Burnside. Front row: Paul McIlroy, Sheridan 'Bucky' Roger Jensen, Dave Ballinger. Absent when photo was taken were Mike Bright and Greg Noll. Their special blue and white uniforms are lettered with names of various communities in South Bay that have been the home base of flying members to and from Melbourne. Team is tentatively scheduled to leave Nov. 11. (Daily Breeze Photo)



## East Coast Report

By ROBERT BURNSIDE  
Beach Standards Committee, Floridian Lifeguards

Recently, Captain Robert Burnside, Beach Standards Committee Chairman, was sent by the National Surf Life Saving Association to the State of Florida to tour, meet and discuss the lifeguard mode of operation and possible national affiliation with Florida lifeguard departments. A full report will be forthcoming in the next edition of this magazine. Captain Burnside commented at a recent meeting of the Board of Directors of the National Surf Life Saving Association of America at San Clemente on April 11, 1972.

"Lifeguards the world over have the same philosophy and dedication. The Floridian lifeguards, having all the hazards and problems experienced by peers throughout the world, have one additional trait and responsibility which he handles with tact and efficiency; that being the tremendous responsibility of a vast amount of senior citizens who have retired in the beautiful State of Florida. That responsibility is one that encompasses not only alertness for safety, but compassion for their age and understanding of their needs. Their accomplishment is one that has been too long overlooked and is comparable to the roughest set of circumstances any beach lifeguard may be called upon to handle. It is a year around pressure with an excessive amount of coronaries, in-shore holes, rip tides, as well as the infamous Portuguese Man-O-War that plagues the Florida lifeguards. Their record is a proud one and justifiably so, in my opinion. I am delighted at the response given to me and the enthusiasm to consolidating with the National Surf Life Saving Association of America."

Captain Burnside will submit to the editor a complete report on statistics, mode of operation and other interesting items in the next publication of this magazine. ■



A Miami Beach Lifeguard renders assistance to a down bather.

SURF LIFESAVERS ASSOCIATION

Executive Meeting

Jan. 14, 1964

Redondo Beach, Calif.

-2000 - Meeting brought to order.

-Burnside called roll.

-Services represented: L. A. City, L. A. County, Santa Monica City, Huntington Beach City, Long Beach, State Beach (Dist. 5), Newport Beach, San Clemente City,

-Burnside called for response by delegates on proposal:

L. A. City.....	In favor of consolidation	- will so move
L. A. County.....	" " "	- has organized
Santa Monica.....	" " "	- is organizing
Seal Beach.....	Undecided	
Huntington Beach.....	In favor of consolidation	- is organizing
Newport Beach.....	" " "	- will organize
San Clemente.....	" " "	- will organize
State Beach.....	Undecided	

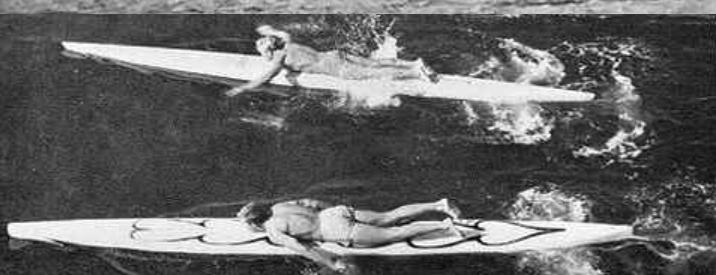
A discussion followed as to potential problems that would be forthcoming and a lengthy discussion as to the advantageous. Burnside explained the example organizational chart to those present and answered questions concerning it. Delegates decided the following:

1. To return to respective areas and explain complete program to all prospective members.
2. To return with the feelings of their department.
3. To return with any suggestions.

- Meeting Adjourned - 2245

**The First formally typed minutes..from the 2nd meeting held**

### "The 1974 Zuma Crew"



LAGUNA BEACH,  
CALIFORNIA



APRIL 15th 2004

### "The Early Years" 1956-1979

On behalf of the Charter Members of the Surf Lifesaving Association of America, who have gathered here to join with you in the 40th anniversary of this Association, and for those members who have departed to a higher level of lifeguarding, this manuscript has been compiled for you.

It represents an overview of the early activity of the original Board of Directors of our Association. The official typed minutes of the first 5 years of the Association minutes have been forwarded to the President of the USLA. These are to be placed in the Archives of the National Association. At some time in the near future this material will be made available to all the members of the Association.

Attached to this manuscript you will find a photo copy of the first meeting minutes of the SLSA (Surf Lifesaving Association of America) later known as the NSLA and presently as the USLA.

The present Association has fulfilled the early vision we all hoped might come about. It has truly exceeded far beyond that vision and to that end we applaud all of you for the many accomplishments you have achieved. Your dedication has advanced the profession of lifesaving and given to the people of our nation the safest beaches in the world, staffed with the finest and best trained Lifeguards in the world.

**CONGRATULATIONS,**

Chief Vince Moorhouse, Huntington Beach  
(reassigned)  
Chief Dick Hazard, San Clemente (reassigned)  
Rudy Kroon, Santa Monica (reassigned)  
Bob Burnside, LACD

Max Bowman, Huntington Beach  
Don Rohrer, L.A. City / County  
Tim Dorsey, Seal Beach  
Jim Richards, Santa Monica  
Dick Heineman, L.A. City

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