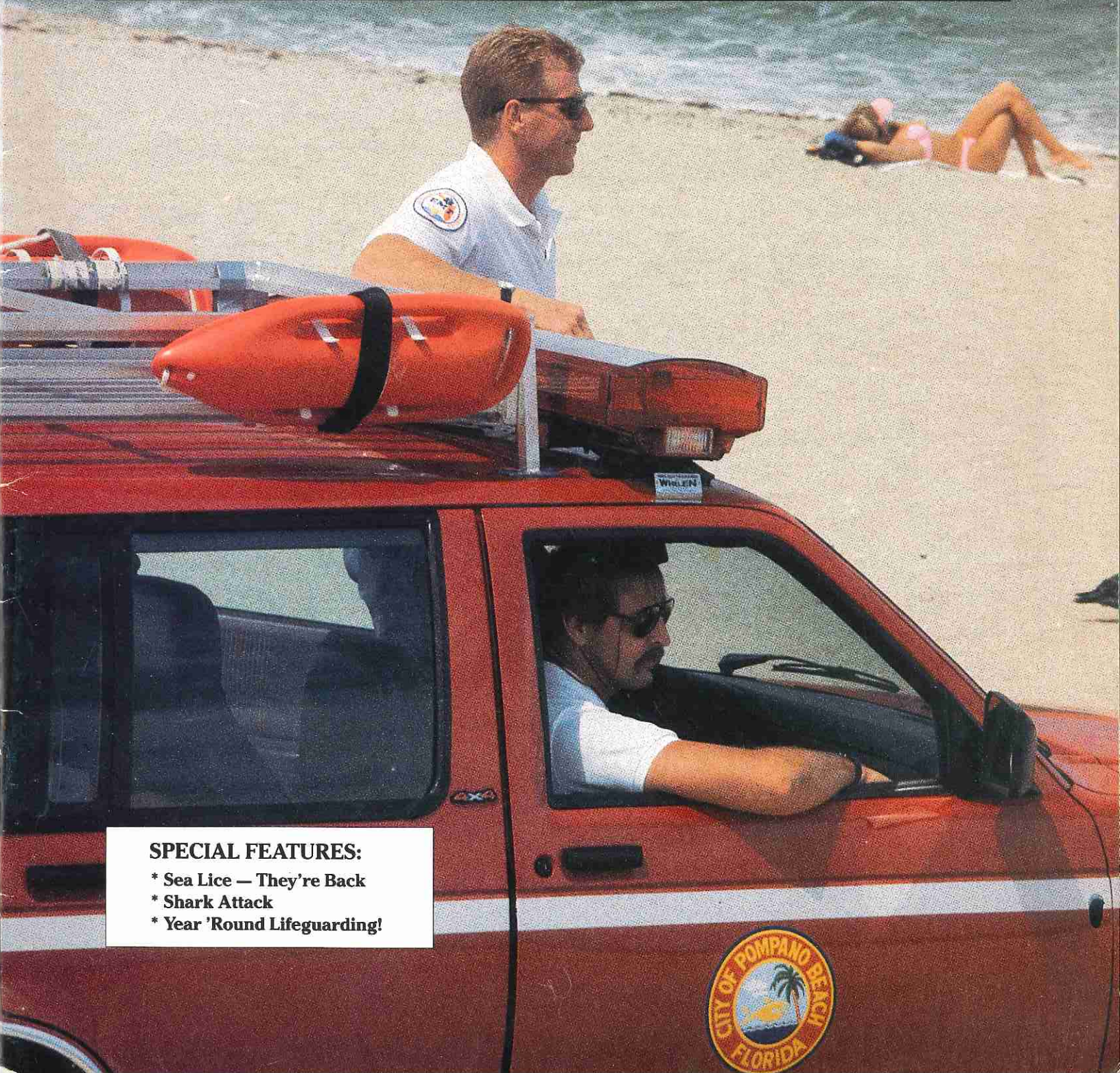


# Ocean LIFEGUARD

Florida Beach Patrol Chiefs Association / Southeast Lifesaving Association

SUMMER 1992

VOL. IV, ISSUE 4



**SPECIAL FEATURES:**

- \* Sea Lice — They're Back
- \* Shark Attack
- \* Year 'Round Lifeguarding!



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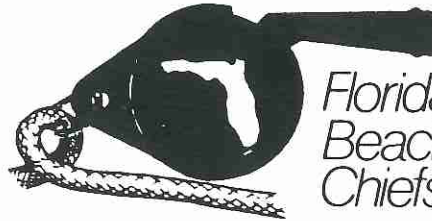
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***Mission Statement: To Promote Public Safety & Education  
on our Surf Beaches and to Create the Highest Level of Professionalism  
among our Lifeguard Ranks.***

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Dr. John Fletemeyer

### Florida Ocean Lifeguarding Magazine

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May 27, 1992

Dear Reader,

Once again the Florida Beach Patrol Chiefs Association is proud to be a sponsor of "Ocean Lifeguard Magazine". The FBPCA was formed in 1982 by the directors or "chiefs" of beach patrols throughout the state of Florida. Since then we have undertaken a variety of programs designed to upgrade our profession and increase public awareness relative to ocean and beach safety, all with the ultimate goal of saving lives.

The Lifeguard of the Year program continues to be a huge success in the area of public relations and as a goal for all ocean lifeguards to strive for. This year's winner, Jerry Falconer, is a Lieutenant for the Pompano Beach Patrol. Congratulations.

Presently, we are deeply involved in the development of a curriculum to be used in the creation of a state certification for Florida Ocean Lifeguards. We are proud of our profession as well as our accomplishments and look forward to the new challenges that lie ahead. As always, we encourage all Florida ocean lifesaving agencies to join the FBPCA in it's efforts through membership and participation. The more resources we have, the better we can serve our profession and the public.

Sincerely,

Dan Reidy  
President

DR/ma

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BEACH PATROL  
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# Southeast Lifesaving Association / United States Lifesaving Association (Southeast Region)

Dear Fellow Lifeguards;

The Southeast Lifesaving Association is proud of its accomplishments since its inception. Formed to address the needs and concerns of professional surf lifesavers along the Southeast and Gulf Coasts of the great State of Florida, SELA has been promising results in its efforts.

SELA has had valuable input to federal mandates established by OSHA in regards to recognition of lifeguards as a high risk occupation. Also, working on federal guidelines in regards to contact with infectious diseases and bloodborn pathogens has been a main goal of SELA.

In state, SELA along with the Florida Beach Patrols Chiefs Association are working together to establish lifeguards as a recognized link in the state EMS system. EMT's, paramedics, firefighters, and police are all protected and kept informed by state laws and state health agencies. SELA is working toward having lifeguards included in these groups.

Also, SELA and FBPCA are close to completion of a training manual and certification for lifeguards at surf beaches.

Aside from the issues of health and safety for lifeguards, SELA has made efforts to improve from within. Pride, professionalism and performance are the cornerstones from which this organization is building its foundation.

Pride in ourselves. We are true professional surf lifesavers. A valuable link in the EMS system, we seek to provide lifeguards and the public with the highest level of safety and protection.

Professionalism in the services that we provide. Holding and maintaining the highest standards of service to the community and representing ourselves as deserving the respect of other emergency response organizations.

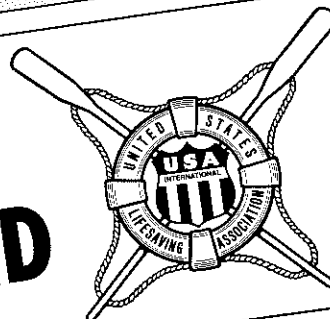
Finally, performance. Pride and professionalism mean little without action. Meeting the needs and concerns of our members will be SELA's number one goal.

Rip current videos, public education, health and safety legislation kept SELA at the forefront of professional surf lifesaving. SELA looks to help foster the goals and objectives of the USLA throughout our region and nationally.

Lifeguards for Lifeguards,  
*Gerry Falconer*  
Gerry Falconer, President

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## Southeast Lifesaving Association / United States Lifesaving Association (Southeast Region)

June 10, 1992

### AN OPEN LETTER TO ALL SOUTHEAST REGIONAL LIFEGUARDS:

The Hallandale Beach Patrol along with our Parks and Recreation Department is proud to announce we will be hosting the Annual Southeast Regional Lifeguard Championships on July 11, 1992.

All of us in the City of Hallandale are excited at the opportunity of bringing the membership of the Southeast Region to our beach and are working to make this years competition a memorable one. We are now in the process of putting together an agenda for the days events and soon will be sending information packets to all the chapters of our region.

In closing, let me say it is my hope that this years regional event will not only prove a fun and exciting competition, but also will help educate the public in our professions vast knowledge and rescue skills.

Yours in service,  
*Andy Lynch*  
Andy Lynch  
Beach Supervisor  
City of Hallandale

### 1992 Southeast Lifesaving Association's Surf Lifesaving Championships Event Schedule

Hallandale Beach (July 11, 1992)

Registration	8:00 AM	Rescue Board Race	2:00 PM
Team Meeting	8:30 AM	Surf Ski	3:00 PM
Surfboat Race	9:30 AM	Distance Swim	4:00 PM
Surf Rescue Race	11:00 AM	Iron Men & Iron Women	4:30 PM
2 Mile Run	11:30 AM	Run Relay	6:15 PM
Rescue Board Rescue	12:00	Beach Flags	6:30 PM
Run-Swim-Run	12:30 PM	Host Event	7:00 PM
Land Line Rescue	1:00 PM		



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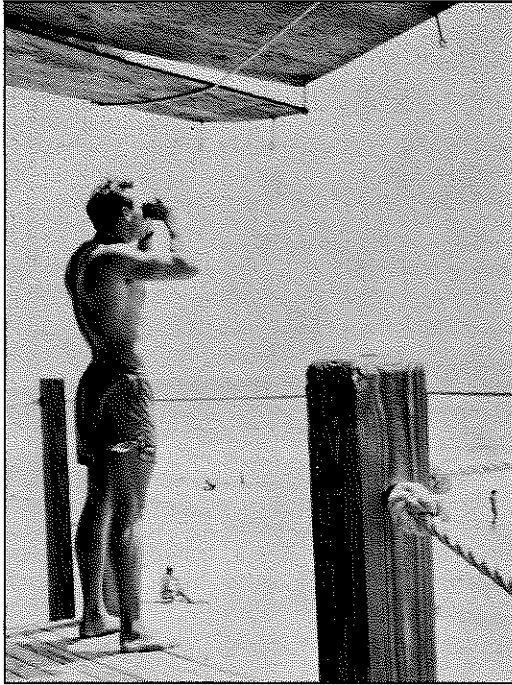
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1984 FILE PHOTO

A lifeguard watches a Fort Pierce beach.

## Lifeguards are there when you really need them

**I** would like to say thanks for lifeguards and rescue teams that respond so fast and efficiently to emergencies. They know how to calm down a scared, injured person.

On May 25, around 9:30 a.m., I was at Lantana Beach with my boyfriend. All of a sudden, a wave caught me by surprise, and I was forced to the bottom of the ocean, striking my head and face.

I sustained a severe cervical sprain, facial bruises and a broken nose. The water was only waist-deep and luckily enough I did not hit any rocks.

I'm glad the rescue team responded when I needed them. The public should be aware that they do, indeed, save lives.

**Debra Blood  
Lake Worth**

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# Developments and Future Trends In Lifeguarding

KIM TYSON

**I**n the past 20 years the professional lifeguard has taken on a new conceptual image and will continue to evolve into the highly skilled rescue technician that the position demands. With swimming being the number one participation sport in the USA (according to *USA Today*), and with an ever-increasing number of aquatic facilities being built to meet the demand, the job responsibilities of the lifeguard have undergone extensive changes. What was once a seasonal job available primarily for men has developed into a career position requiring highly specialized knowledge and skills regardless of gender. This knowledge includes the wide spectrum of accident prevention techniques, rescue procedures, facility and personnel management skills, and an understanding of the legal responsibilities that the position encompasses. The advent of advanced training programs in lifeguarding by certifying bodies such as the American Red Cross, YMCA, USLA, and Boy Scouts, has heightened the awareness of public and private facility operators for the need of advanced specialized rescue training for the various aquatic activities offered at individual sites. The current job description of a lifeguard has changed because of increased supervisory responsibility and the impact of liability on recreational activities.

## Lifeguard's increased responsibility

In the year 2000 the lifeguard may well be certified in advanced life support techniques (EMT), interacting with Emergency Medical Services and search and rescue professionals. The mass media are educating the public concerning the changing role of the lifeguard. Television, movies, newspapers, and radio all report information on water safety accident prevention and advanced rescues performed by the lifeguards of today. The public can turn on the television at prime time and watch lifeguards in action: training, preventing, educating and reacting to emergency situations. The public's education in the area of civil liability and the important responsibility that a supervisor of children and adult recreation takes on is just starting to be understood by the vast majority of water safety professionals and the volunteers in America today.

Practices that just a few years ago were considered optional have become standard operating procedures at all aquatic facilities. Distinctive uniforms, formal written emergency plans, inservice training programs, advanced certifications in first aid, CPR, water safety, and lifeguarding are now considered employment criteria in aquatics. High-tech emergency response vehicles such as zodiacs, wave runners, and power rescue boats work in conjunction with communication systems to provide state-of-the-art protection in open water areas. With lifeguard training services being tailored to meet specific needs at beaches, wave pools and water theme parks, certification programs have been developed to guarantee their quality. This

has allowed state and national lifeguarding competitions to be extended beyond the traditional ocean setting to include swimming pools and wave park environments. Human performance research in rescue simulations will further establish specific standards for the various rescue environments which will identify additional criteria for lifeguard employment selection. Lifeguarding has just begun to take its rightful place as a respected member of the local accident prevention and rescue team.

## Technological changes

With the continued development of high tech electronic surveillance systems such as sonar signals and video monitoring, lifeguards will have an increased need for special technical skills. Stationed at underwater windows to observe potential victims, lifeguards are linked with surface support staff via radio or telephone communicators. In addition, the use of computers for data collection and accident analysis will influence accident prevention practices. Electronic textbooks and interactive computer systems will be used for inservice training aimed at accessing advanced safety concepts. Devices to monitor ultra-violet rays are currently available to be worn by all lifeguards and patrons to prevent overexposure to harmful UV rays. Perhaps some day soon a lifeguard will be stationed in a plastic tube for 360 degree viewing in a rescue station at the bottom of large pool and theme park facilities. Studies related to safety signs will require a re-evaluation of how we warn our swimmers of facility hazards. The study of memory on visual and verbal warnings will surely change our methods of warnings for aquatics. The developments in the high tech industry the past 10 years have been phenomenal. What the next 20 years holds for us is limited by our own imaginations.

It is our mission to now look beyond the immediate future and envision the next areas of growth and development for lifeguarding. Lifeguards will see advancements made in public image, recruitment, inservice training, standardized fitness testing and competition over the next 20 years. Our challenge is to look beyond the next horizon and find the new opportunities and challenges that await us.

---

*Kim Tyson is an instructional specialist in the Department of Kinesiology at the University of Texas, Austin, TX 78712.*

JOPERD — May/June 1990

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# “SEA LICE” and SEABATHERS’ ERUPTION: Advances in Identifying an elusive Marine Organism

By: Dr. Robert S. Tomchik, M.P.H.

Each year, swimmers at South Florida beaches have come down with intense itching, largely in areas under bathing suits which usually lasts three to seven days. Known as “sea lice”, this condition affects thousands of swimmers and lifeguards each year, although technically sea lice are small parasites that infect fish and are not the cause of this condition.

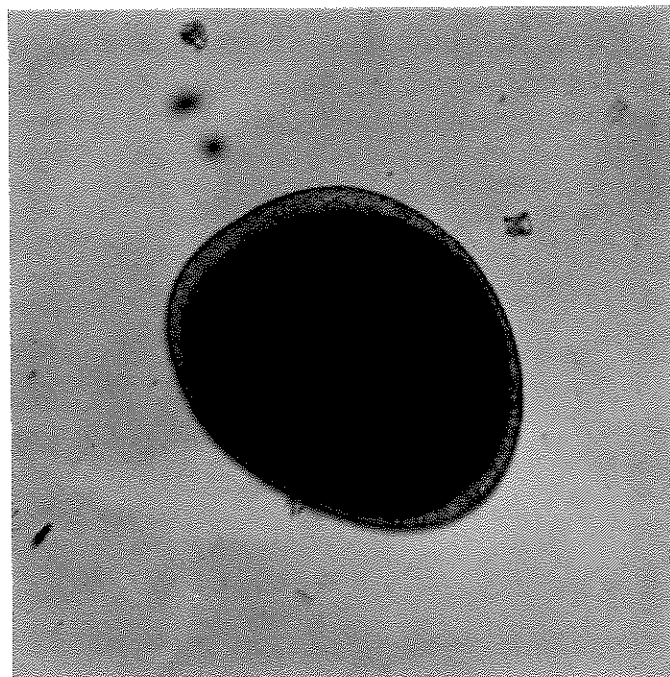
For many years, the identity of “sea lice” has remained a mystery. Within the past year, however, dermatologists, marine biologists and epidemiologists at the University of Miami, with the support of the City of Delray and the Florida Beach Patrol Chiefs’ Association have been making steady progress in unmasking the identity of this organism.

## HISTORY

Described around the turn of the 20th century as “The Itch” by residents of South Florida, “sea lice” were first described in the medical literature by a University of Miami dermatologist, Wiley M. Sams, in 1949. Sams termed this condition, “seabathers’ eruption”, but was not able to identify its cause.

most cases occur in the Florida Keys, Broward and Palm Beach Counties. No cases have been reported north of Martin County.

Numerous cases of Seabathers’ eruption have also been reported from the Bahamas and the Caribbean (cases are known to have occurred off Cuba, the Yucatan Peninsula in Mexico and the U.S. Virgin Islands). The organism causing seabathers’ eruption probably lives throughout the Caribbean.



*Sea Lice Organism (Planula larva)  
seen under low magnification*

## A stinging cell

Cnidarians, or “Sea Lice” as they are commonly known, exist as free-swimming microscopic organisms which are armed with stinging tenacles that can leave swimmers with a very irritating rash.

Undischarged  
Cnidaria



Discharged  
Cnidaria

SOURCES: A field to Coral Reefs of the Caribbean and Florida, An introduction to the Biology of Marine Life

## GEOGRAPHIC and TEMPORAL DISTRIBUTION

Seabathers’ eruption in Florida and the Caribbean usually occurs first in late March or April and lasts as late as July although most cases occur in May and June. Although the first cases were reported in the 1940s, similar cases appear to have occurred as early as the turn of the century; in all likelihood, this organism has been around for centuries.

In Florida Seabathers’ eruption occurs on the Atlantic coast from Key West north to Stuart;

## CLINICAL SYMPTOMS

Persons with “Seabathers’ Eruption” develop raised, itchy lesions after swimming in the ocean. Most persons first notice lesions 8 to 12 hours after leaving the ocean, although others are affected within minutes of swimming in an affected area and notice a pricking sensation while swimming. Rash and itching usually last for several days to one week, although certain individuals experience prolonged reactions. Recurrent reactions may occur for up to a month following initial exposure.

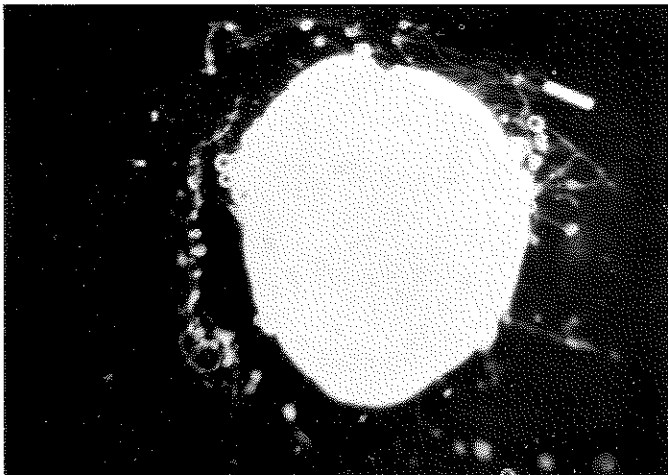
Rashes occur mostly on areas underneath bathing suits, although they may occur on any area of the body. Areas that are frequently affected include underarms, the hairline, neck and areas in contact with hard surfaces while in the water (ei. chest and abdomen of surfers).

Persons with extensive eruptions, particularly children have developed chills, headache, nausea, vomiting and fever, which usually subside within 24 to 72 hours. In addition, reports of recurrent eruptions have been received. In some cases, these occurred after wearing the same clothes or bathing suits that were being worn when the initial eruption occurred. In other cases, these recurrences appear without re-exposure.

### THEORIES OF THE CAUSE OF SEABATHERS' ERUPTION

For many years, the cause of seabathers' eruption has been debated. Some have claimed the schistosome cercariae are responsible for this reaction. Cercariae cause a condition called "Swimmer's Itch" which is common in bodies of fresh water, but this reaction occurs predominantly on uncovered areas of skin and schistosome cercariae are rarely found in ocean waters.

Scientists currently believe that "sea lice" are larval forms of cnidarians, a group of marine animals that contain stinging structures called nematocysts. Cnidarians include animals such as jellyfish, corals, sea anemones, hydroids and Portuguese Man o' War.



*Sea Lice Organism seen under high magnification*

Researchers at the University of Miami have noticed large numbers of cnidarian larvae during the periods of heavy "sea lice" activity. These larvae are approximately the size of a head of a pin and are difficult to see with the naked eye. Larvae become trapped in

bathing suits during swimming or ocean activities. When they are subjected to pressure, tiny nematocysts in the larvae "fire" and inject the skin with tiny amounts of toxins. These proteins may cause stinging right away or a delayed reaction that causes itching and welts hours later.

University of Miami researchers are in the process of identifying the exact organism (or organisms) responsible for seabathers' eruption in Florida. Cnidarian larvae are being grown in laboratories so that they can be identified; lifeguards and patients are being tested for antibodies to different known marine toxins.

### PREVENTION AND TREATMENT

Beyond the obvious recommendations of avoiding ocean activities during periods when "sea lice" are known to be present, a number of precautions to reduce or eliminate exposures would be prudent. These would include the following:

1) If sea lice are present, dry or rinse off as soon as possible after leaving water. If possible, change clothing before showering. NOTE: Fresh water is known to discharge nematocysts. Showering with fresh water while wearing bathing suits or clothing may cause trapped larvae to discharge nematocysts, increasing the number and severity of stings.

2) Persons should minimize trapping of larvae by clothing and bathing suits while in the water. Males can avoid wearing shirts or tops. One-piece bathing suits appear to be very effective at trapping sea lice; females may wish to wear two-piece suits that have less surface area and result in fewer stings than one-piece suits.

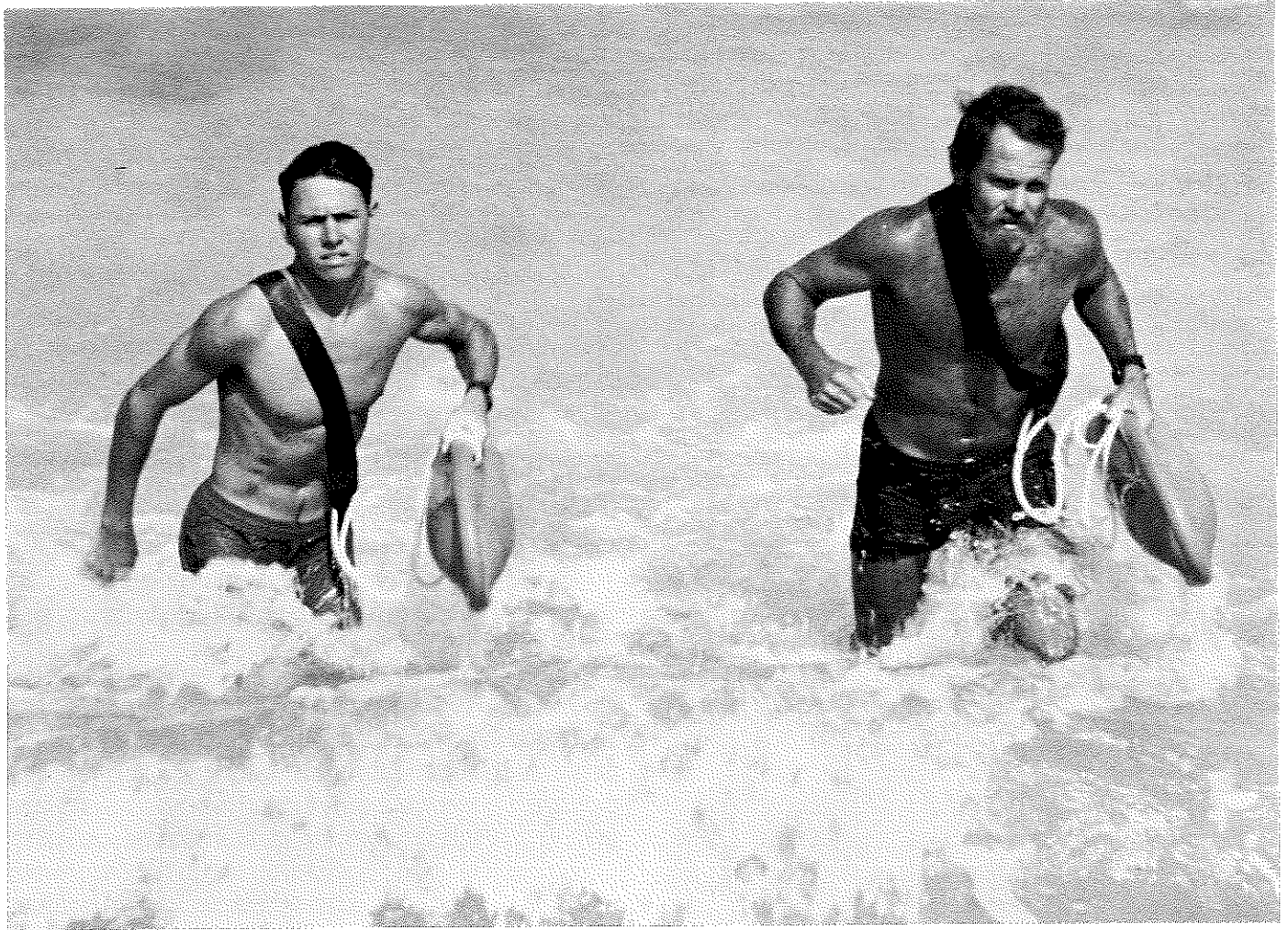
3) Surfers experience stings when they lie on surfboards, by crushing larvae, thereby causing stings. Tight-fitting vests appear to eliminate this problem, although reactions may occur where the edges of vests come into contact with skin.

Seabathers' eruption is largely a delayed reaction to stings: Once stings occur, treatment is mostly symptomatic. Treatment of "sea lice" with medications for itching such as topical or oral Benadryl and topical hydrocortisone creams is helpful. Other remedies that may provide relief include topical application of aluminum sulfate surfactant (Stingose), meat tenderizer, baking soda and dilute ammonia.

Systematic reactions to "sea lice" such as fever, nausea and headache are a result of injected toxins and should be treated symptomatically. Persons with prolonged or severe reactions may require systemic steroids and should be treated by a physician.

# Father and Son — A Lifeguard Tradition is Born

by Rick Guest



*"The Old Man (Rick Guest) and his son" — the Lifeguard Tradition Lives On!*

As professional lifeguards, we acquire a truly vast and remarkable amount of information. To me, there are few things in life that are more fulfilling than being able to pass on this information to my sons and daughters.

This is, and should be, every father's dream, but how many of us ever get the chance to see it happen? Of course, many fathers are understandably thwarted by the nature of their occupations, but God has richly blessed us in the lifeguard profession with the golden opportunity to carry on the

lifeguard tradition. That's what it's all about!

My son's name is Aaron. He was born on October 28, 1972 and grew up in south Florida. He, of course, was raised on salt spray and no one can ever remember when he couldn't swim.

At the age of five, the Old man (that's me) put him through snorkeling boot camp and that's also when I started taking him surfing. On big days, if he couldn't get through the break on his own, I would make him hold onto his leash until he was able to punch through. And by 13 and like

his father, surfing became Aaron's Passion.

Aaron is a first rate SCUBA diver. He has made numerous dives to 150' on the Bimini Wall. Once an amorous sea turtle tried to add him to his list of conquests. Many time while free-diving, he surprises more experienced divers by bringing up lobsters and groupers from 50 feet.

Until recently, Aaron never had much inclination towards competitive sports, even though his dad tried to coax him that way many times, especially since he was so obviously athlete material.

In the summer of '90, he trained for one month with Hollywood lifeguards for the Jr. USLA Regionals and Nationals. He placed first in the long swim and run relay, but left before the "flag event" in the regionals. At the Jr. Nationals in Pompano, he was 7th in the 3K run with a 12:26, third in the thousand paddle and 4th in flags after failing to extract himself from the old ham sandwich routine (which his father had warned him about!).

In June of this year, Aaron joined his father as a Hollywood Beach Patrol Lifeguard and made the roster for the participants in the regionals at

Delray Beach with dad as his coach, relay partner and competitor. This is probably the first time a father and son have ever competed in the same event in a USLA tournament.

Aaron and I somehow made it through the open flags heat together, then dad won the Seniors flags and met Aaron in the open finals where he got to fifth spot before Aaron beat him (just barely, mind you) to the flag. Then dad watched Aaron "light 'em up" as he beat a long time top flags veteran, Scott Hall from Boca, to the flag for top honors in Open Flags.

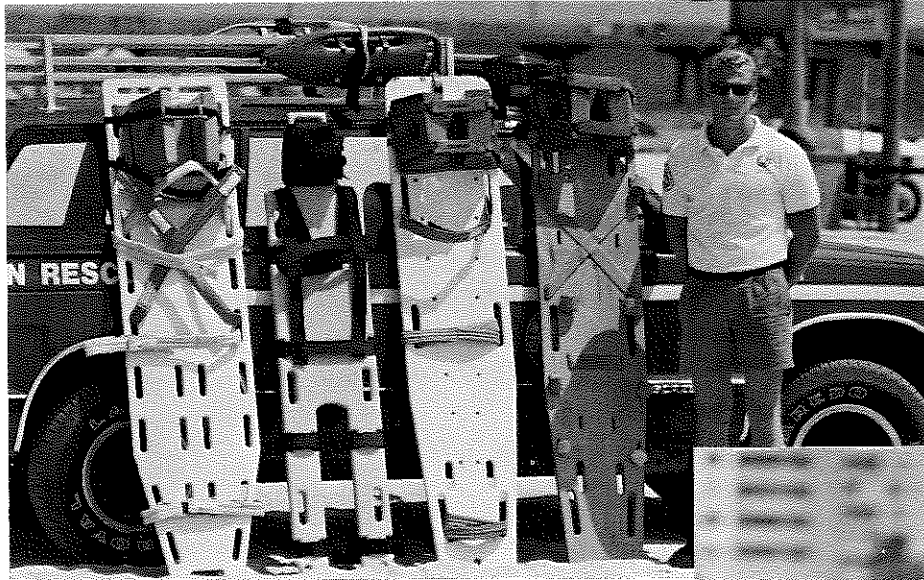
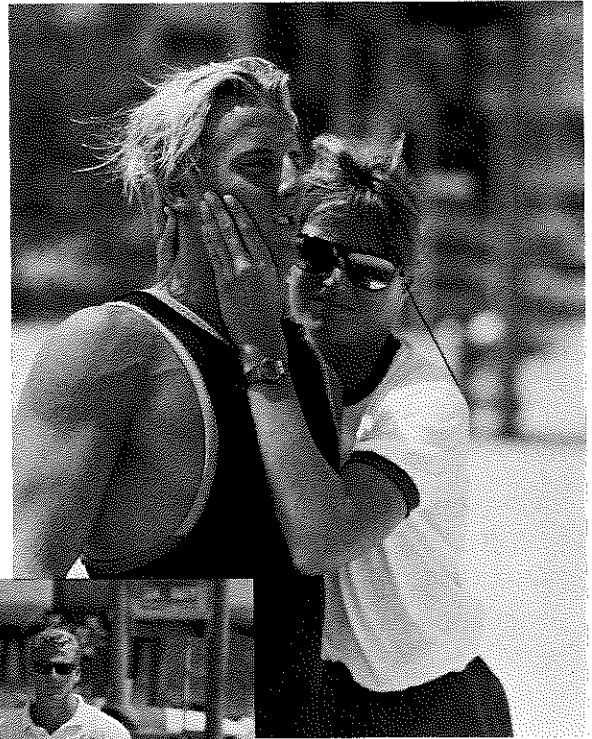
It was like a movie script, as a father I couldn't have been more proud of my son. Then, to the end of the day, Aaron and his old man, along with two other fellow guards, finished a close second to the always fast Pompano team in the run relay.

At more than twenty two years on the patrol, you can be sure that I was going to enjoy my job a little more with Aaron on the beach too. As my son continues to grow and mature into a fine young man, I can truly appreciate the value of a "father and son tradition" in ocean lifeguarding.



*The Florida Beach Patrol Chiefs Association and the United States Lifesaving Association are dedicated to preserving and protecting the beach environment and its wildlife inhabitants. Please do your part to help. Don't leave trash and debris on the beach and don't walk on the dune vegetation.*

# *Spinal Injury*

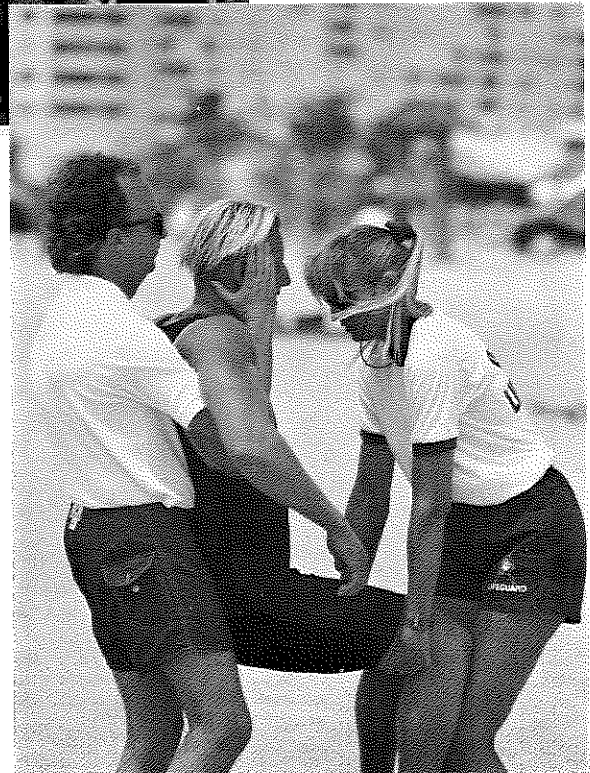


## *Management Training*

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# SPINAL CHORD INJURIES: *Appropriate Management Responses*

By: John Fletemeyer

As professional lifeguards, we have a duty to respond to a wide range of medical emergencies ranging from minor cuts and scrapes to the immediate life threatening emergencies. Perhaps the most serious and difficult aquatic injuries to manage are those involving that delicate yet remarkable bit of anatomical structure called the human spine.

Every year numerous bathers are either severely paralyzed or killed from spinal chord trauma resulting from a wave and its associated injury causing a victim's head and neck to forcibly strike the ocean bottom. Lifeguards versed in professional jargon sometimes refer to this condition as being "pile driven".

Although cervical injury can happen to almost anyone, a California study on this subject over a ten year period from 1976 to 1986 revealed that most victims are young males between the ages of 15 and 25 (Figure 1). Not surprisingly,

this population segment represents the most "daring" and energetic group of bathers, and consequently the most prone to this type of injury.

Because of the seriousness of this problem, a number of our lifeguards have not been content to stand idly by. Instead, through a volunteer effort, members of the Florida Beach Patrol Chiefs Association, the Southeast Lifesaving Association and the Miami Project developed and produced a professional training video dealing with this complicated subject. This video demonstrated two accepted methods of victim extrication. The most important lesson presented in this video is to always suspect a possible spinal chord injury with any victim located in shallow water. To do otherwise may cause irreparable injury to the victim, even worse, it may cause death.

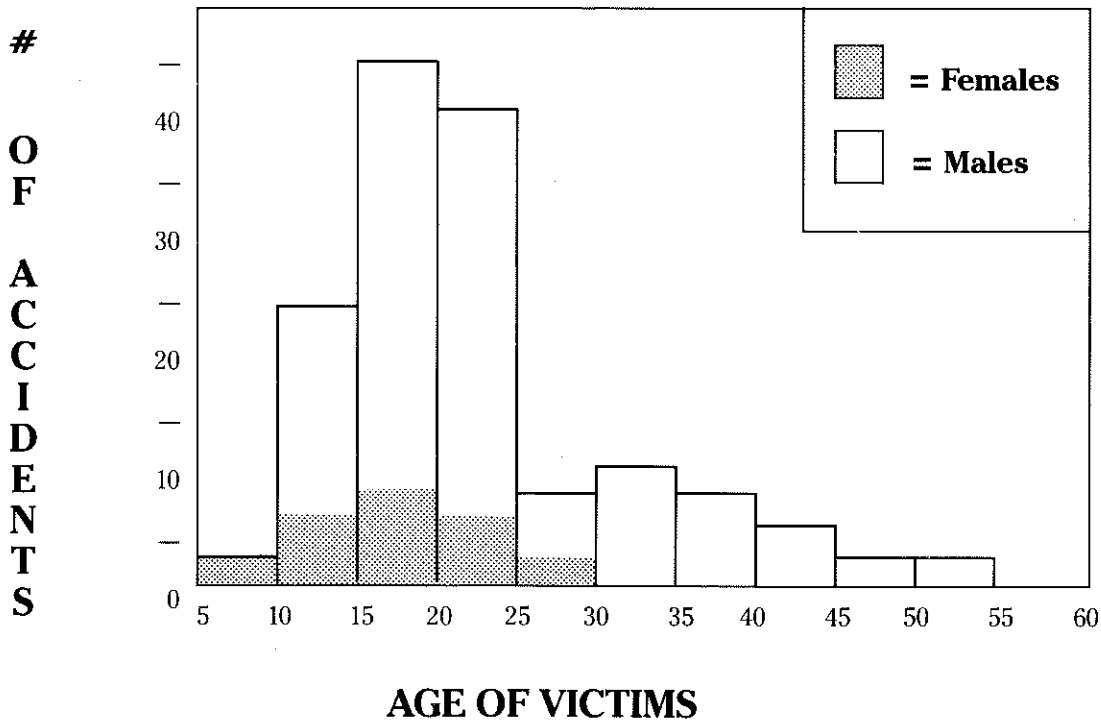
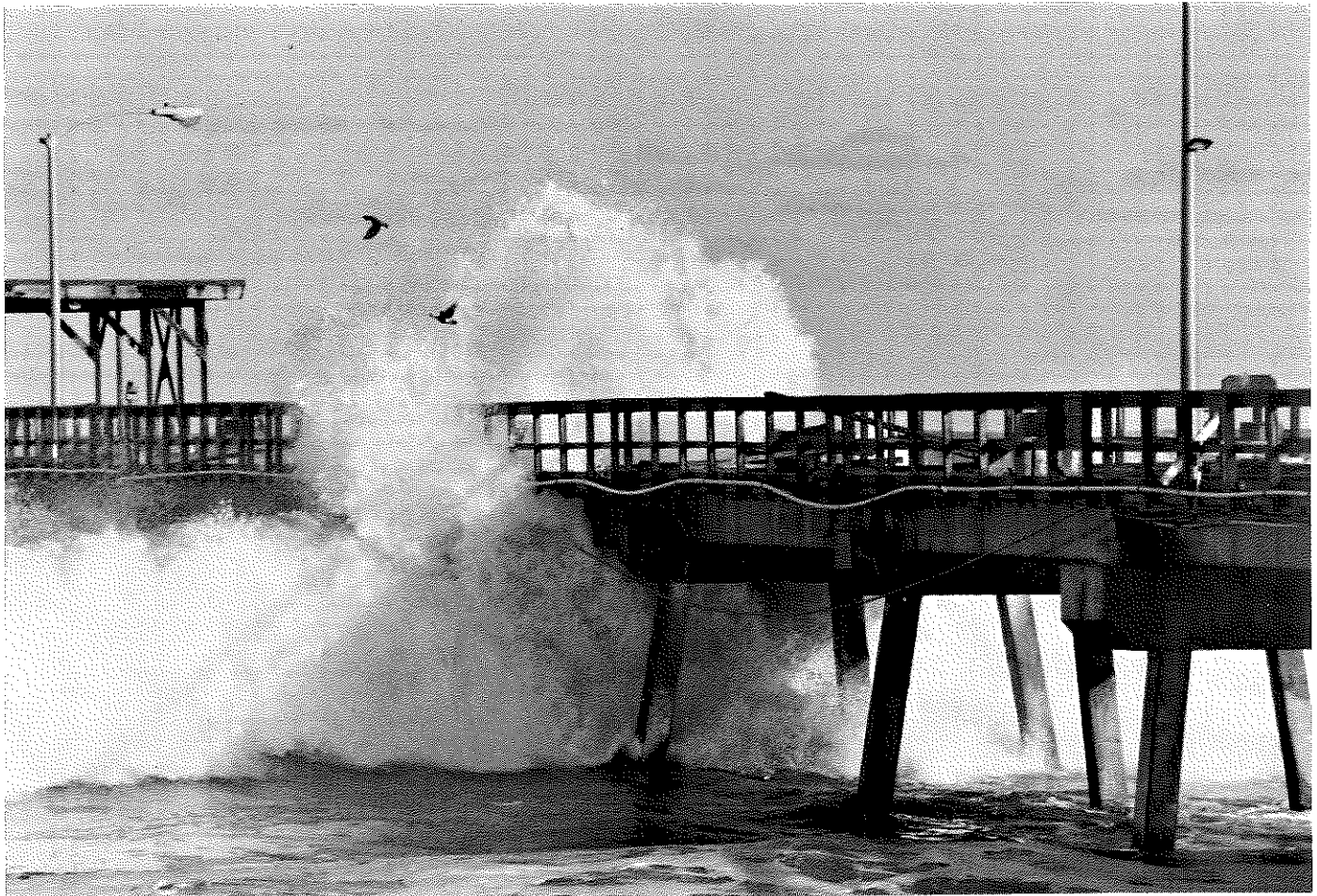


Figure 1: Histogram showing the distribution of accidents by ages of the victims (From: Beratan, K. & R. Osborne 1987, "Frequency and demographic aspects of shallow-water diving accidents in Southern California Sea Grant Publ. p 9).

# BIG THURSDAY !



*"Big Thursday" wave striking Lake Worth Pier (October 31, 1991) — Photo by Elaine Collins*

What veteran lifeguard can forget the movie, "Big Wednesday"? In this film classic Jan Michael Vincent is portrayed as an aging surfer burdened with the responsibilities of job and family. However, when a freak storm strikes the California Coast, the temptation of giant surf is too hard to resist. So off Jan and a few of his buddies went to take on the challenge of 20 foot surf.

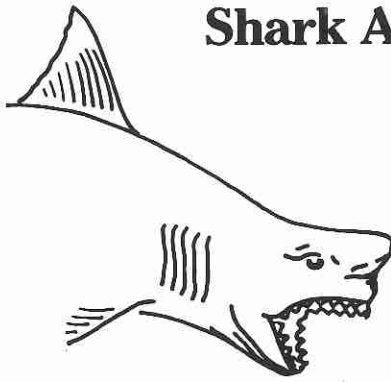
Who would have thought that Florida ever would have its own version of Big Wednesday (actually if was on Thursday, October 31st)? At 2:00 p.m. under clear, blue skies and calm wind, tiny swells began to disrupt the lake like ocean. This was a common occurrence, so no one took notice. About 10 minutes later, the tiny swells evolved into 3 footers. Still no big deal. Then 10 more minutes and 10 to 12 foot swells began to pound the shore line. "Holly Sh—," what's goin' on here? And then by 2:40 p.m. (still sunny) the waves reached 20 feet

-- the largest surf in recent memories.

In Palm Beach, much of highway A1A was destroyed. One of the beach patrol buildings was demolished while another filled up to the roof with water. The seawalls could not withstand the pounding of the breakers -- soon they disappeared into the water. Palm trees were broken like match sticks and a number of small boats were capsized.

When it was all over the "Big Thursday" surf was responsible for damaging more than one million dollars in property. Miraculously, no one suffered any serious injuries. That night, a NOAA meteorologist reported on TV, "This was a storm event of a lifetime". He didn't have to tell the lifeguards this, they knew already. The memory of "Big Thursday" will remain as a testimonial to the ocean's great power and unpredictability.

The Editor . . .



# Shark Aggression in Nearshore Waters: A Florida Perspective

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International Shark Attack File  
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CRANDON BEACH  
MAREA BAJA  
SOUTH AND NORTH HOLES  
INVIERNO; PRINCIPIO DE PRIMAVERA

OTOJO

low tide. Another likely attack site is an area with a steep dropoff in depth such as the margin of a channel. Sharks congregate in these areas because their natural food items also congregate there.

Although the chances of an average person being killed by a shark while recreating at the beach are markedly lower for other risks associated with these activities (e.g. drowning and traffic fatalities), the threat of shark attack has traditionally fostered the greatest fear among beachgoers. The danger of injury from acute sunburn, dehydration, lacerations and spinal trauma are also higher than from shark bite. Nevertheless, shark attack is viewed as the ultimate risk by most beach users, perhaps because humans tend to hold in awe any natural phenomenon that they cannot completely control or understand.

Florida leads the nation in aggressive interactions between sharks and humans and thus serves as a useful case study of what can happen when two competing groups attempt to occupy the same habitat. In this contribution I present an overview of the threat of shark attack in Florida waters, in part utilizing the data base offered by the American Elasmobranch Society's *International Shark Attack File* housed at the Florida Museum of Natural History, and offer advice to those who frequent nearshore waters in Florida and other areas.

## Who Are The Major Players?

All humans entering marine waters inhabited by sharks are potential targets of shark attack, but historical data demonstrate a marked skewness towards young males. This probably is a result of the nature of this group's aquatic activities since it does not reflect proportional human utilization patterns (Baldrige, 1974). In Florida most attacks involve surfers and active swimmers, groups traditionally dominated by young white males.

Three species of sharks have been implicated repetitively as the major attackers of man: the white shark (*Carcharodon carcharias*), tiger shark (*Galeocerdo cuvier*), and bull shark (*Carcharhinus leucas*). White shark attacks in United States waters are largely confined to the West Coast and, to a lesser extent, northern East Coast waters in the Mid Atlantic Bight. In Florida, tiger and bull shark attacks are common, but the undocumented leader may be the spinner shark (*Carcharhinus brevipinna*), a mid-sized (maximum size about nine feet) animal that normally feeds on fishes and invertebrates. This species is a very common inhabitant of nearshore waters and is frequently seen sharing the same wave with surfers along Florida's east coast. My observations of the wounds of victims from this area and the abundance of this shark in the region leads me to believe that spinners are responsible for the bulk of Florida's attacks. Positive identification of attacking sharks is very difficult, however, since victims rarely make adequate observations of the attacker during the "heat" of the interaction, tooth remains are seldom found, and diagnostic characters for many carcharhinid sharks, including the spinner, are difficult to discern even by trained professionals. The blacktip shark (*Carcharhinus limbatus*), which closely resembles the spinner, may also be involved. Realistically, almost any shark in the right size range, six feet or greater, is a potential threat to humans.

## Where Do Attacks Occur?

Analysis of the pre-1968 data base in the File reveals 110 well-documented attacks from Florida waters. Most attacks (86%) occurred on the east coast from the Georgia border to Key West; 65% were concentrated from Palm Beach County southward through the Florida Keys (Fig. 1). Regional levels of shark attack in Florida are correlated with the relative concentrations of sharks and humans in the water. Shark attacks occur when there are sufficient quantities of sharks and humans occupying the same space, thus most attacks occur in areas with high human utilization of nearshore waters. The east coast Florida hosted the largest number of people in the water during this analytical period, leading to the above pattern. Similarly, on Florida's Gulf coast, an area with historically lower levels of human activity, the highest number of attacks were recorded in Sarasota County, the site of well-utilized beaches in Bradenton and Sarasota, and Bay County, home of Panama City, another major tourist area.

Most attacks occur in nearshore areas, most often inshore on the first sandbar, but commonly between sandbars where sharks are frequently trapped at

## When Do Attacks Occur?

Attacks are most likely to occur during darkness because sharks are most active during this period and because they have a distinct competitive sensory advantage over humans in low light situations. However, most attacks occur by day because human utilization patterns favor diurnal activity. Attacks occur more commonly when waters are murky due to increased turbidity, again owing to the shark's superior sensory capabilities and to an increased chance of the shark making a prey identification mistake.

In Florida shark attacks occur most often in the winter and early spring because:

- 1) there are more sharks present during this time period, especially along the east coast, as a result of southward migrations related to lowered water temperatures in the northern parts of their ranges,
- 2) more people are on the beaches (read: tourists) and in particular, there is an abundance of people engaged in appropriate interactive activities, especially surfing, during this time of the year, and
- 3) there is an increased level of baitfish activity since many prey species exit cooler sound and estuarine waters for warmer, food-rich, offshore areas during these seasons.

North of Florida the pattern is reversed with most attacks occurring during summer months coincidental with peak levels of human and shark abundances. I have not sufficiently analyzed Gulf of Mexico data at the time of this writing, but my impression is that if a seasonal pattern exists it mirrors that of the northern East Coast. Along the West Coast, Miller and Collier (1980) and Lea and Miller (1985) indicate that June to November is the prime time for areas south of Point Conception, CA, and July to September for areas north of Point Conception.

## How Do Attacks Occur and What Are the Consequences?

I place Florida shark attacks into three discreet categories: "hit and run" attacks, "bump and bite" attacks and provoked attacks.

"Hit and run" attacks represent about 80% of Florida attacks. Typically these attacks occur in the surf zone with surfers or swimmers the normal victims. The victims seldom sees his attacker prior to the bite; wounds are usually confined to a single bite or slash. I consider these attacks to be cases of mistaken identity based on poor visibility conditions and/or the harsh physical conditions present in the surf zone. A predator working this environment faces the same challenges that draw surfers to the area, namely breaking surf and strong wash and current conditions; quick decisions must be made and rapid movements are required to successfully capture prey in this environment. When difficult physical conditions are considered in conjunction with the natural presence of food items in the area plus provocative human activities (g. abundant splashing, contrasting colored swimsuits, shiny jewelry and contrasting tanning, especially involving the soles of feet) mimicking aspects of prey item behavior and appearance, it is not surprising that upon biting, the shark quickly realizes that the human is a foreign object, ie. it is not the anticipated natural prey or it is simply too large, and immediately releases the victim and does not return. Alternatively, some attacks, specifically those involving slash wounds, might also involve agonistic shark behaviors related to territoriality or dominance.

About 15% of Florida attacks are "bump and bite" attacks. Usually involving divers or swimmers in the deeper waters. Bump and bite attacks are characterized by the shark initially circling and often bumping the victim prior to the actual attack. Repeat attacks are not uncommon and multiple or sustained bites leading to severe injuries or fatality are the rule. I consider these to be directed attacks that are the ramifications of feeding or agonistic behaviors.

Provoked attacks are rare (about 5%), but may involve repeat or prolonged attacks leading to severe injuries. Divers sometimes instigate shark attacks by chasing or grabbing sharks; in Florida the nurse shark (*Ginglymostoma cirratum*) is most often the object of such abuse. Normally a docile species that is very tolerant of humans, nurse sharks exhibit bulldog-like tenacity when provoked, and it often has been reported that a nurse's jaws have had to be pried open or the head cut off to terminate an attack. Bathers have infrequently been implicated in provoking sharks; the most recent attack of this nature occurred at Sanibel where a family wading in the shallows inadvertently stumbled over a sedentary shark (thought to be a lemon shark, *Negaprion brevirostris*) leading to a particularly vicious attack.

A typical shark attack in Florida results in a single bite or slash on the calf or foot. There is no significant loss of tissue in about half of the attacks. Pre-1968 Florida nearshore attacks resulted in just under 18% fatalities, but loss of life is rarer in recent years with the advent of improved medical treatment and emergency services.

#### Why Do Sharks Attack?

We are still unable to definitively answer this question because there is no rigorous way to experimentally test a shark's attack motivation (Gruber, 1988). However, based on available information on Florida shark attacks, I surmise that 85% or more are related to aggression, fear, or dominance activities of the sharks or from cases of mistaken identity, and only about 15% to directed feeding activity.

The key point, from a purely predictive or preventative point of view, is simply that two groups are competing for the same space and one of them, the sharks, has long occupied this habitat utilizing adaptations, both morphological and behavioral, developed over millions of years of evolution. Humans are at a decided disadvantage in this system and as the weaker player, must adapt to the situation.

#### How Do We Adapt To Sharks?

The following advice is given to those who frequent nearshore shallows:

- 1) Always swim in groups. Sharks are less likely to attack a group of humans than an isolated individual.
- 2) Avoid swimming during darkness or dawn/dusk hours when light is limited and sharks own a competitive sensory advantage.
- 3) Do not enter the water if bleeding from an open wound or if menstruating. A shark's olfactory ability is acute.
- 4) Avoid wearing shiny objects (jewelry) which approximate the sheen of light on fish scales.
- 5) Do not enter the water if sharks are known to be present and evacuate if seen while in the water.
- 6) Do not wander too far away from shore. This isolates an individual and additionally places one far away from assistance.
- 7) Avoid waters with known effluents or additions of sewage.
- 8) Sightings of porpoises do not indicate the absence of sharks. Sharks and porpoises often eat the same food items.
- 9) Avoid waters that are being used by sport or commercial fishermen, or that clearly indicate the presence of bait fishes or feeding activity. Diving seabirds are good indicators of such action.
- 10) Use extra caution when waters are murky.
- 11) Uneven tanning and bright clothing colors should be avoided. Sharks see contrast particularly well.
- 12) Refrain from excess splashing. Do not allow pets in the water because of their erratic movements.
- 13) Exercise caution when occupying the area between sandbars or near steep dropoffs.
- 14) Don't molest sharks!

If the above advice is heeded I feel quite certain that a large number of attacks can be prevented. If an injury occurs it is important to stop bleeding as quickly as possible using direct pressure or a tourniquet. The victim should be treated for shock and transferred as quickly as possible to medical facilities.

The danger of shark attack needs to be put in perspective. The total number of attacks in a given area, such as Florida, is meaningful only if compared to the number of man-hours spent in the water. Such per capita figures are difficult to calculate because we lack data on the amount of time humans spend in the water, but consider this: 35 million tourists visit Florida each year; if each spends only three hours in the water during their visit, more than a hundred million man hours are so involved. Even without considering the time spent in the water by native

Floridians, it is obvious that my estimate of 20-25 attacks (resulting in less than one death) occurring per year in Florida becomes pretty diluted on a per capita basis. This should not dampen the respect we ought to extend a danger that is consistently present, but rather it should spread the message that there is no shame in having a shark attack occur on a given beach. Such interactions are statistically expected in the same manner as any other injuries

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I thank Perry W. Gilbert and the late Leonard Schultz for their efforts in founding and developing the *International Shark Attack File* and H. David Baldrige for permission to allow the American Elasmobranch Society to use his analyses of the *File's* data in our ongoing computerization of the *File*. My use of the "paper" *File* in this paper underscored exactly how valuable computerization will be for future analyses. Paloma Ibarra kindly rendered Figure 1.

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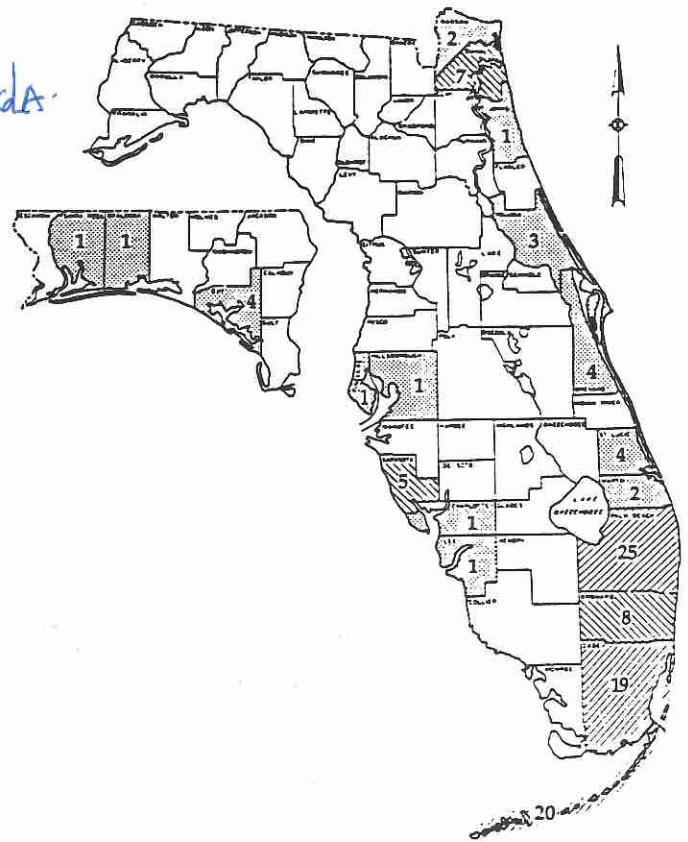
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Figure 1 — Number of pre-1968 shark attacks in Florida by county based on reports available in the *International Shark Attack File*.



# *New Lifeguard Legislation*

## **The Lifeguard Role in the Emergency Medical Service System**

*By: Rich Noyes*



Lifeguards now have a formal place in the Florida Emergency Medical Services system. At the January State EMS Advisory Council, representatives of the Florida Beach Patrol Chief's Association and the United States Lifesaving Association were recognized as the representatives of a new lifeguard constituency group.

In the Spring of this year the Florida State Legislature passed Senate Bill 294, the EMS Sunset Review Act and it was signed into law by the Governor. This act recognizes lifeguards as one of the professions that will come under the jurisdiction of the Department of Health and Rehabilitative Services EMS office. The Act also calls for a study of whether there is a need for the Office of Emergency Medical Services to regulate lifeguarding and if so; what "... education, recordkeeping, equipment, facilities and notification of communicable diseases."

Lifeguards are specifically written into the law as part of the wider first responder group. As a result of this new law, lifeguard agencies will be required to enter into a memorandum of understanding with the EMS provider for their jurisdiction. Included in the memorandum of understanding are ... "protocols, roles and responsibilities of first responder personnel at an emergency scene, and documentation required for patient care."

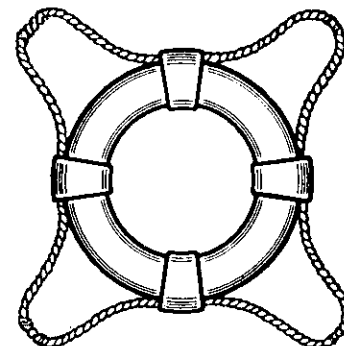
What this means to the tower lifeguard is that our profession is linked to the State through the same agency that regulates EMT's and Paramedics. Local fire/rescue or other EMS providers will have a formal relationship with lifeguard agencies. We have control of our future through the lifeguard study.

In previous years legislation regulating pool lifeguards was passed as a result of community action. This legislation did not take into account the needs of lifeguards. This new legislation will give us the opportunity to craft how we fit into the State system to meet the professional needs of lifeguards and the needs of the general public for effective consistent lifeguard services anywhere in Florida.

All of these successes resulted from the diligent efforts and determination of the Florida Beach Patrol Chiefs Association and United States Lifesaving Association. These organizations established the goals for how Lifeguarding should be recognized in Florida Law. The Chief's and the USLA met with Emergency Medical Services and HRS's Environmental Health Division to promote our position. The Chief's and the USLA established themselves as constituency groups at a EMS Advisory Council Meeting. At that meeting, the EMS Advisory Council adopted the recommendation of the Lifeguard Contituecy Group to recognize our profession as one that is appropriately within the jurisdiction and interest of EMS and recommend that Lifeguards should be in the chain of notification if individuals are exposed to communicable diseases. Joint lobbying efforts were mounted to include these recommendations into the pending EMS sunset review legislation.

The work is not over yet. Lifeguards must now actively assist in the study of the need for lifeguard regulation and the translating of the study findings into further legislation that will promote our profession and adequately meet our needs. Over the next few months the USLA and the Florida Beach Patrol Chief's Association will be providing periodic updates on the study and future legislative efforts.

Rich Noyes



# The Many Challenges of Year Round Lifeguarding

By

Scott Hall

Boca Raton Beach Patrol

Florida lifeguards are being faced with many challenges during the 90's. Like many other health care professions, societal changes have necessitated tremendous growth within the lifeguard community. Today's multidimensional Florida lifeguards can be considered well-versed in Emergency Medical care, marine biology, public relations and inflatable rescue boat operations as they work to protect Florida's greatest asset — its beaches.

Year round guarding can be most easily viewed from a seasonal prospective. Like most of the nation, Florida boasts big beach crowds during the summer. Calm waters and prevailing southeast breezes are characteristic of the weather. Likewise common are afternoon storms and tropical depressions. Florida is the lightning capital of the United States. Rapidly approaching squalls require prudent evacuation of the beach patrons as a sunny beach can be transformed into a charged electrical field within minutes. Tropical depressions likewise test lifeguards as they work to protect surf enthusiasts and rash thrill-seekers.

A recent affliction that visits our tropical waters during the summer are the cursed sea-lice. Invisible to the eye, sea-lice leave a small bump similar to a mosquito bite that itches and causes minor discomfort. Speculation suggests these microscopic pests are the larvae of the jellyfish family, but unsubstantiated thought pins the blames on nutrient-rich sewage outfall that floods our coastal waters.

Other environmental concerns include turtle nesting from May to August. Lifeguards participate with researchers to determine nest numbers, turtle species and amount of hatchlings in an effort to increase a dwindling turtle population.

On land, lifeguards battle the scorching intensity of the sun as they treat heat exhaustion, dehydration and sunburn cases with regularity throughout the summer months.

One of the joys of summer guarding are the many tournaments which culminate in a regional championship that qualifies the victors for the USLA nationals. These competitions serve to hone professional lifesaving skills and are an enormous public education tool, as are the many junior lifeguard programs Florida boasts.

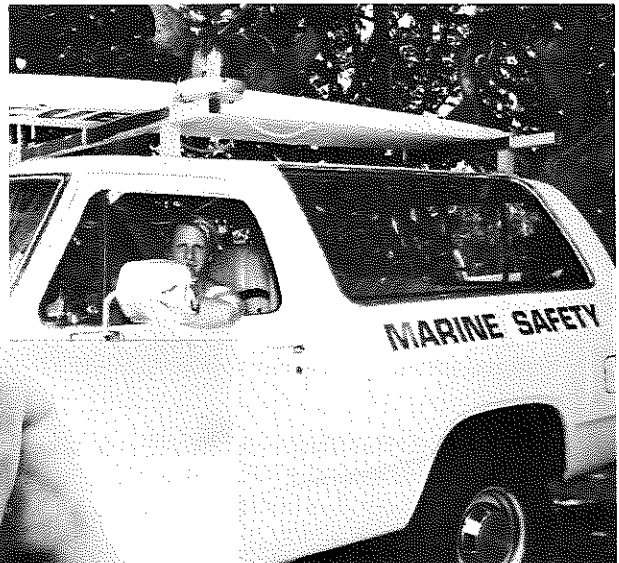
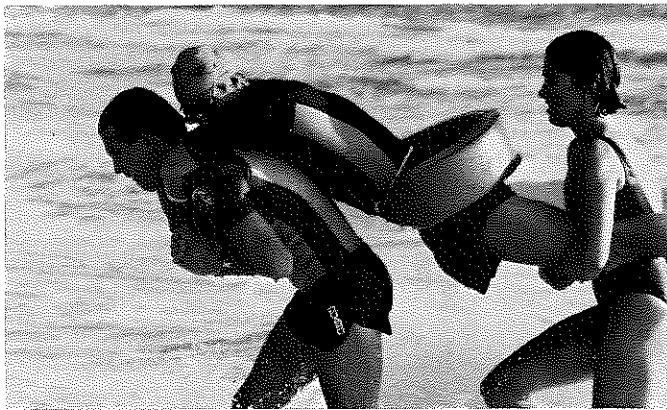
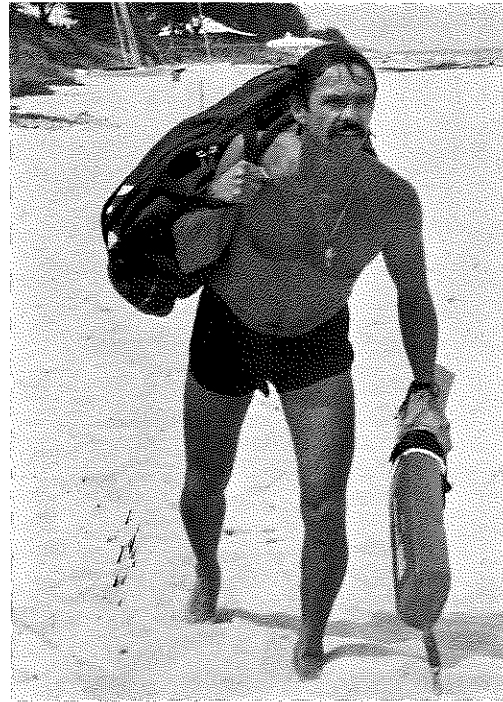
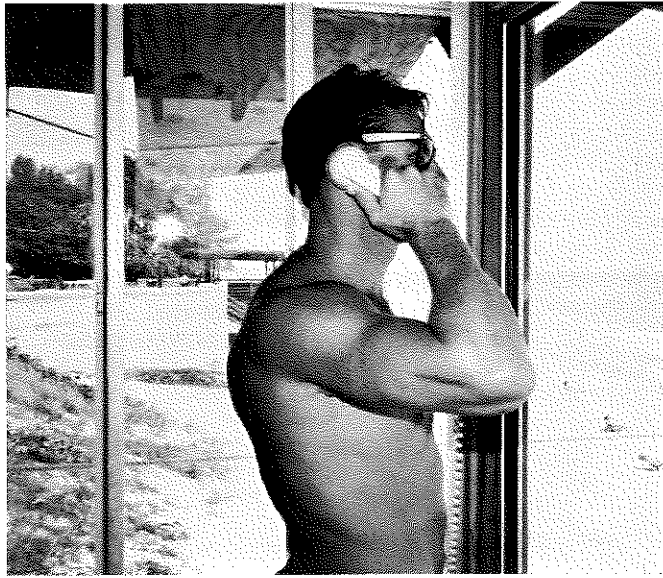
As Labor Day passes, summer crowds dissipate and the autumn doldrums begin. Oppressive humidity and volatile storms make up the months of September and early October. The migratory patterns of marine life are visible as tremendous schools of baitfish swim southward. Ever present in these schools are: sharks, barracuda and other predatory fish. Swimmers must be kept out of the schools of fish lest they be bitten by predatory fish in a feeding frenzy.

Late October and November bring mild frontal systems as a prelude to the potent winter storms of December and January. With the Thanksgiving Holiday, tourists begin filtering into the state in an everincreasing flood that crests over the Easter Holidays. This portion of the year is by far the most active time for Florida lifeguards. Sun-seeking visitors hellbent on enjoying themselves engage in recreational excesses that invariably require the lifeguard's assistance. The swimming skills many of the tourists had over the summer have long since become rusty. Their good intentions of a nice swim are thrown an unexpected twist when they confront blustry winds that generate rough surf. Many tourists enter the warm tropical waters to enjoy a little body surfing only to find themselves heading out to sea in a runout. The other common scenario finds the unwitting tourist being stung by a seemingly innocuous blue bubble known as the Portugese Man-O-War, whose potent sting is excruciatingly painful, and for some, a life-threatening emergency. How does the ocean lifeguard cope with this sensory overload of activity? Preventative work and coordinated rescue responses are the most effective measures. Lifeguard Headquarters have a daily water conditions tape-recorded message. Lifeguards also deliver reports to Television and Radio stations, which serve to increase public awareness of ever-changing ocean conditions. The summer training and drills now are put into play when emergencies arrive that require swift, qualified responses.

A relatively new addition to lifeguarding has been the introduction of the inflatable rescue boat (IRB). Floridians have the greatest amount of boats per capita of any state. Boating accidents and diving injuries have increased proportionately with the population boom, requiring the lifeguards to employ the IRB for responses, offshore and within inlets.

With the 90's come a host of problems: AIDS, new hepatitis strains, medical waste, skin cancer accelerated by a depleting ozone layer and conservation battles. Educational and prophalytic measures are dramatic changes employed by today's professionals to meet these problems. Lifeguards use microshields, prophalytic gloves, sunscreens, enclosed towers, UV sunfiltering sunglasses and provide EMT certification as their standard of care. This evolution is indicative of the increasingly important role lifeguards play in their communities. Rather than remaining static, lifeguards have expanded their horizons to successfully interact with many other elements of society that elevate the prestige of the Lifeguarding profession while allowing guards to employ their knowledge to aid society.

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THE PIER

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SHARKY'S BEACH CLUB

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MARINER'S PINK SHELL  
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ST. AUGUSTINE BEACH  
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# Anheuser-Busch Family Fitness Weekend Tour of Florida

Exclusive Sports Marketing is proud to present the 7th season of The Bud Light Sprintman Triathlon. The 1992 Series will visit 10 beautiful resorts throughout the state of Florida and culminates in The Florida Keys at The Checca Lodge in October. Sprintman races consist of 1/2 mile swims, 12 to 23 mile bike rides, and 3 mile runs. The distances on the bike ride will vary depending upon the venue. At each stop the elite athletes compete for points toward The Bud Light Sprintman Championship and The National Championship which will combine for almost \$25,000 in prize money to be awarded in the Florida Keys. Others compete in age group divisions, on relay teams, or in our Clydesdale Divisions, for men over 185 pounds and women over 140 pounds.

Come ready to compete, but don't forget to have fun and utilize these weekends as a chance to "just get away!" Each of our host sites extend special discounts to participants in The Bud Light Sprintman Triathlon. They also offer a tremendous selection of sporting and social related activities to keep you busy the entire weekend. Call early to make your reservations.

The Bud Light Sprintman Triathlon Series which is part of The Anheuser-Busch Family Fitness Weekend is a nationally televised Series that can be seen on Prime Network. The weekend kicks off with the "Friday Night Rush Hour," consisting of the Bud Dry In-Line Skate Race and The Michelob Light Cool Summer Nights 5K Run which can be used as a warm up for the triathlon. Saturday, it's the Chex "SprintKids" Triathlon for 7-12 year olds. Sunday is the "Main Event" The Bud Light Sprintman Triathlon.

If your commitment is anything like ours, you will have weekends filled with camaraderie, fitness, and fun!

## Bud Light Florida Beach Volleyball Series

1992 marks the inaugural season of The Bud Light Florida Beach Volleyball Series. Exclusive Sports Marketing is organizing Florida Beach Volleyball by providing Florida's recreational players with top quality tournament and league play in 11 of the hottest volleyball markets throughout the state.

Our tournaments are conducted on the most spectacular beaches in the state of Florida. Everyone is welcome to participate in our 2 man competition and will fit into one of our divisions. We have men's open, women's open, men's A, men's BB, men's B, co-ed A, and co-ed B. The men's A, men's BB, and men's B play Saturday while the co-ed A, co-ed B, men's open, and women's open play Sunday. The Series will travel to 11 qualifying sites where the top three teams in each division become eligible to compete in The \$10,000 Bud Light Florida Beach Volleyball Championships in Daytona Beach, October 2-4, 1992.

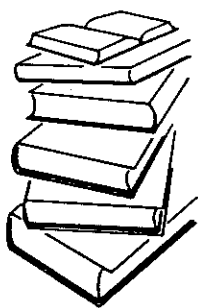
The Bud Light Florida Beach Volleyball Series is dedicated to you, the athlete, and to keeping the beaches beautiful through our "Kick Clean Sand Program". This program is an association of beach volleyball players and enthusiasts and it is designed to contribute directly to keeping Florida beaches clean and environmentally safe. Sponsored by Waste Management of North America, this campaign not only includes our beach venues, but includes beaches around the state. We hope to bring to everyone's attention that along with the privilege of playing on the most beautiful beaches comes the responsibility for their care and protection.

# THE LIFEGUARD'S LIBRARY

Submitted By:

Lt. John Bartlett

St. Lucie County Marine Safety



Life is richer for the lifeguard who learns the many benefits of books. The lore contained in the library enriches both the personal and professional life.

Public relations are a large part of our job and knowledge of the beach environment will endear us to our patrons as well as making our day more interesting.

Learning more about the nature, history, geography and sociology can make us a more informed, aware lifeguard while the inspiration in some books will help our mind travel beyond the boundaries of the beach.

*First let's learn a little about the beach;*

My favorite is "Edge of the Sea" by Rachel Carson, who publicized the dangers of D.D.T. in "Silent Spring". The "Edge of the Sea" and the companion volume, "Under the Sea Wind", weave a fascinating tale of our favorite environment.

Her books are fascinating stories with the tang of salt on the pages.

Also favorites, are the books of Evell Gibbons. He spent several years in Hawaii living off the land. My favorites are "The Beach Comber Handbook" and "Stalking the Blue Eyed Scallop".

— tales of edible seaweed and limpet spaghetti; I made it with the limpets off the Fort Pierce Inlot rocks. He's a great storyteller, has wonderful recipes and tells a thousand and one things to do with a coconut. With his book you can dine along the duneline partaking of the pursulane.

Birdwatching is a great pastime for those of us who sit the wood. Many days have been brightened by spotting a rare Frigate Bird soaring on thermals over the condo's. I can't resist pointing it out to people who wouldn't have noticed it or known about it's unparalleled ariel abilities.

Nobody seems to know those little sandpipers are called "Sanderlings" though everybody loves them. Pelicans surfing wave fronts, Osprey's diving for fish. Southern Florida's beaches are a bird watchers paradise.

We are often the first to see rare birds blown ashore. Get a bird book!

A great history book for us is "The Barefoot Mailman" by Theodore Pratt.

Set during the late 1800's when Florida was just becoming settled, this easy reading novel features our beach.

It's a romance about the man who delivered the mail from West Palm to Miami walking the deserted beach and swimming the inlets.

We learn how to best walk on a sloping beach, Indian place names, all about flotsam and jetsam and the beginnings of our home towns when the population of Miami was 50. You think you've seen bed Sand Fleas, read this story.

Our bodies may be trapped in towers all day but sometimes our minds are free to float and the direction they drift is up to us. Instead of worrying about bills, we can lift our lives with inspiration from the inspired. "Nature is God's Art" and it's all around us.

Of course, there is "Walden" or anything by Thoreau who tells us "Most mean lead lives of quiet desperation" and how we can improve our lives with simplicity. He loved water too.

Then there's "Gifts from the Sea" by Ann Morrow Lindberg, life's passages wisely observed and paralleled with oceanic creatures. It's a great gift book. "Jonathon Livingston Seagull" by Richard Bach is another great inspirational book as is "Pilgrim at Tinker Creek" by Annie Dillard. In "Pilgrim", the Pulitzer winner tells us how a Florida beach experience showed her how we are all together a part of God's great creation.

*Then there are many inspiring poems.*

"I am the daughter of earth and water and the nursling of the sky.  
I rise through the pores of the earth and shores.  
I live but I cannot die."

These are just a few suggestions of books that can enrich our lives. There are many others.

We haven't even touched on the many benefits of learning foreign language yet, for example, "BonJour Mademoiselle and Adios Amigos"!

# Budget

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2. Never Swim Alone. Swim Near a Lifeguard.
3. Check with the Lifeguards on Water Conditions.
4. Learn and Obey the Rules of your Swimming Area.
5. Report Any Dangerous Situations to the Lifeguards or Management.
6. Check the Depth of Underwater Surface by Jumping, Not by Diving Head First.
7. If you are in Trouble, Call or Wave For Help.



## SWIMMERS RESPONSIBILITY CODE



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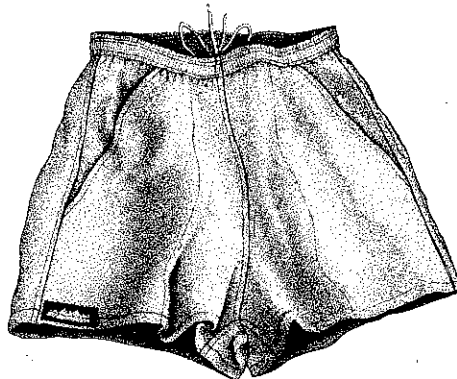
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