

Ocean LIFEGUARD

Florida Beach Patrol Chiefs Association / Southeast Lifesaving Association

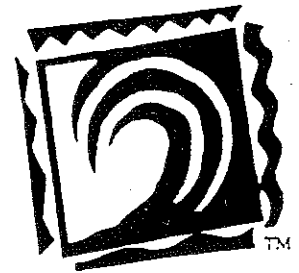
Fall 1994

VOL. VI, ISSUE 6



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**Florida
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Florida Beach Patrol Chiefs Association / Southeast Lifesaving Association
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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UNITED STATES LIFESAVING ASSOCIATION Southeast Region

Dear Fellow Beach Patrols:

After returning from the National USLA meeting, it seems that we have our work cut out for us. As of May, a total of nine (9) applications have been submitted for USLA certification. Out of those 9, six (6) were from California. Let's get the Florida ball moving forward!

The Southeast Region's "Ocean Rescue Series" has prompted large turnouts to the competitions. Friendly team rivalry and professional sportmanship conduct has been displayed by **all** competitors. The efforts of all Beach Patrols, Judges, Sponsors, and people behind the scenes deserve a big **THANKS** for their cooperation and organization. Let's plan for the future and many more tournament series to come!

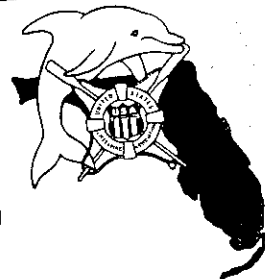
In the past, sponsors have been the key for the purchase of equipment, membership kits, and competition prizes. With recent budget cuts, layoffs, and hiring freezes we all feel the crunch. Try to alleviate some of the burden on your beach. Form a local Chapter of the USLA. If you have one, corporations are always looking for a means of advertising and promoting a worthwhile profession. Lifeguarding has come a long way since the 1960's and the future is much brighter than ever. Survival of your Beach Patrol depends on the enthusiasm among the people in it. Use your resources! Next to California we have the most career Ocean Lifeguards in the Country.

Remember, We all live in the same great State of Florida. If there is something we can do for you speak up and be heard!

Yours in Lifesaving,

Ed Fry, III
President
USLA / SELA

SWIM NEAR A LIFEGUARD





June 1, 1994

Greetings Florida Ocean Lifeguards,

I hope you all had a safe and productive winter season. The Florida Beach Patrol Chiefs Association held it's first Annual Awards Banquet on February 26, 1994. Congratulations to the FB.P.C.A. "Lifeguard of the Year 1993" Najim Musto from Deerfield Beach Patrol, and to the "Beach Patrol of the Year" Lantana Marine Safety. These awards are intended to acknowledge the excellence and professionalism of Ocean Lifeguards as individuals and as agencies in the State of Florida. I would also like to acknowledge "Team Florida" for their participation in the Ocean Lifeguard Challenge in Hawaii last September. This was the first time that Florida Ocean Lifeguards were represented in this event. We wish "Team Florida" the best in their endeavors this year.

The state lifeguard certification project involving the Office of Emergency Medical Services has met significant resistance from other groups of lifeguards in our state. The Florida Beach Patrol Chiefs Association has consistently supported the recommendations of the OEMS and will continue to support and initiate progress in a State Certification process. These recommendations have been sent to the Florida Legislature for a review and discussion.

Members of the FBPCA have seen positive results from the legislation which initiated the inclusion of lifeguards as first responders in the EMS system. Many Ocean Lifeguard agencies are operating in accordance with a Memorandum of Understanding. This has assisted Ocean Lifeguard Supervisors in improving many aspects of their daily operations, i.e. increased communication with their EMS providers, in addition to equipment upgrades and more sophisticated staff training under the direction of a medical doctor.

The United States Lifesaving Association has provided ocean lifeguards with the "Guidelines for Open Water Lifeguard Training & Standards", which includes agency certification through an organized system of Certification Officers and specific criteria. Many member agencies of the FBPCA plan to attain certification in this program. The OEMS has recommended these guidelines as a format for state regulation of ocean lifeguards.

I am extremely disappointed regarding the lack of communication and understanding between the different factions of the lifeguard community in the State of Florida. It is imperative that we as ocean lifeguards set the standards for our community. It is my firm belief that as ocean lifeguard operations continue to develop and improve their services other lifeguards currently opposing the recommendations of the OEMS will have a change of heart. It is the goal of the FBPCA to demonstrate our support of these recommendations by enabling the millions of swimmers using Florida's beaches each year to experience a safe and memorable visit by providing them with professional ocean lifeguard supervision directly involved in the EMS system.

Richard Connell
President, Florida Beach Patrol Chiefs Association

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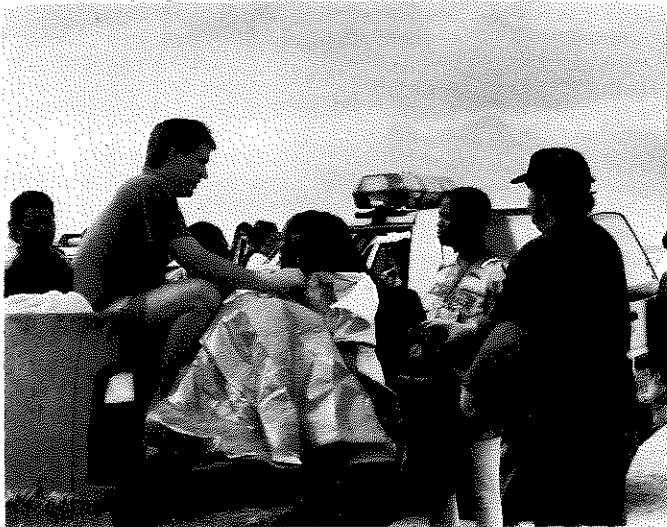
**FLORIDA
BEACH PATROL
Chiefs Association**

What If? Memorial Day Drownings On An Unguarded Beach

Last Memorial day, Florida experienced one of its worst aquatic tragedies when five bathers drowned in a strong rip current on an unguarded Nassua County beach near Jacksonville. Ironically these deaths followed an administrative decision in 1989 to eliminate the beach patrol as a budget savings measure.

These drownings beg the question — "What if the lifeguards still had been working that day?" During a recent interview with Mr. Summerall, director of emergency service for Nassua county, he stated that he seriously doubted that lifeguards would have made a difference.

Having seen lifeguards in action on days with large crowds and with strong "rips" working, I feel obligated to respectfully but strongly disagree. Here's why. Ocean lifeguards are skilled professionals trained to be alert for hazards that might appear on the beach or in the water. Once a hazard is identified, they are further trained to provide the public with an appropriate warning. In rare cases when their warnings fail, they are ready to put their skills to use to affect a rescue.



Near Drowning Victim — American Beach

The value of professional lifeguards is supported by statistics that are maintained by many lifeguard agencies located throughout the state. In 1993 a total of 22 Florida beach patrols reported that they performed over 1.5 million preventative actions. This number translated to many hundreds of lives being saved and countless more serious accidents being avoided. Also this same group reported making a remarkable 4,432 rescues.

These impressive statistics underscore the importance of professional lifeguards. Each year 13 million people visit Florida's beaches. A large percentage of these people are from out of state or from a different county. They often lack the knowledge and experience necessary to deal with many of the hidden dangers associated with the surf environment such as rip currents, dangerous marine life and underwater hazards. Consequently bathing on an unguarded beach is an accident waiting to happen and ignores lifesaving's most important safety tip — always swim near a lifeguard.

Lifeguards rescue over 100 Swimmers

— *The Herald*

Besides the toll on human life, it is likely that these drownings will have other negative ramifications that may go unrecognized for some time. These ramifications involve the economy. In a paper presented by Dr. William Seaman from the Florida Sea Grant Foundation, he reported that about 13 million people take to the beach in our state each year and these people are responsible for contributing about 4.5 million in sales.

If tourists begin perceiving that our beaches are unsafe, a significant drop in our valuable tourist economy could easily result. If you doubt this consider the impact to Miami's economy when German tourists became target practice for a number of local, degenerate thugs. Following the sensational media coverage of this event, foreign tourists began cancelling their reservations in mass resulting in the loss of many millions of dollars to the local Miami economy.

The impact of the Memorial Day drownings to Nassau County may not stop here because you can bet there will be a number of negligence suits. The cost of defending these and the possible settlements could be astronomical. The saving derived from cutting the lifeguards may pale in comparison.

Lifeguard honored for Bringing Drowned Man Back to Life

— *Palm Beach Daily News, December 1, 1992*

History has a habit of repeating itself. To prevent more surf related drownings in Nassua County, administrators will have to find a way of reestablishing their beach patrol. Even a few sections of professionally guarded beach will be better than nothing because with appropriate signage, bathers will at least have the opportunity of swimming in the vicinity of a lifeguard.

Yes, lifeguards do make a difference. Just ask Mrs. Simone Mavrodineanu and Ms. Debra Blood as they watched highly skilled lifeguards as they saved the life of their loved one. These are just two examples of the many thousands of rescues that are performed by lifeguards each year on Florida's beaches.

Human life is far too precious and our economy too valuable to ignore the importance of a professional lifeguard any longer. It's time that the public becomes educated about this fact, especially the administrators and elected officials that make policies effecting professional lifeguarding. Hopefully this short article will help contribute to this educational process.

Fla. Beach Deaths: Panic, Shock 'Why wasn't anyone there to help him?'

— *USA Today, June 1, 1994*

continued...



Near Drowning Victims — American Beach

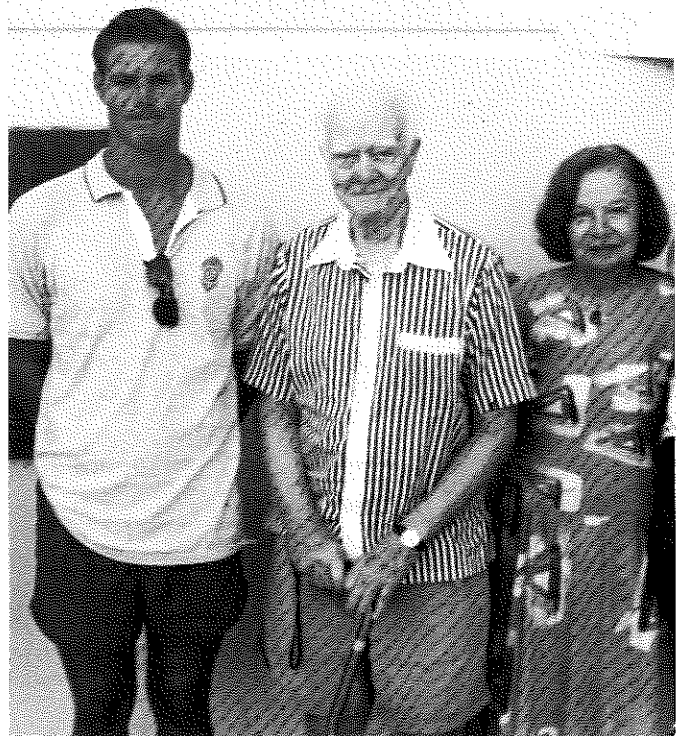
Lifeguards Making A Difference:

Lifeguards are highly skilled professionals that devote their life to protecting the public. Their work is responsible for saving many hundreds of lives. When bathing, always swim near a lifeguard.



Drowning Victim After Being Pulled From a Rip Current — American Beach

Testimonial



“Thank you” . . .

September 3, 1992

Dear Sir:

How does one say “Thank you” for the immeasurable gift of LIFE?

This is what I am trying to do now to Palm Beach Life Guard Craig Pollac and Police Officer Gene Garcia who, through their exceptional skill, efficiency, caring, and promptness to help, last Friday August 28, brought back to life my husband when he was drowning in the ocean.

I wish to direct my undying gratitude to them and to all other members of the Department who through their professionalism and dedication performed this miracle under my eyes.

May they be rewarded as they deserve for their high quality of efficiency and humanity as well as their promptness to come to the scene. The world is a better place since I found out how protected we are.

*Eternally grateful, with love,
Simone Mavrodineanu
Palm Beach County*



1984 FILE PHOTO

A lifeguard watches a Fort Pierce beach.

Lifeguards are there when you really need them

Iwould 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**

Tragedy Points to Importance of Lifeguards

— Sentinel

Beach Where 5 Drowned was Unguarded Since '90

—The Herald, June 1, 1994

5 Drown, 6 Hurt Off Beach in NE Florida Swimmers caught in strange undertow

— The Herald, May 31, 1994



Near Drowning Victim — American Beach

SKIN CANCER & LIFEGUARDS

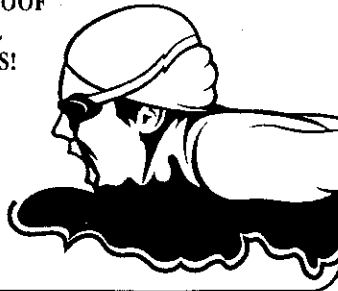
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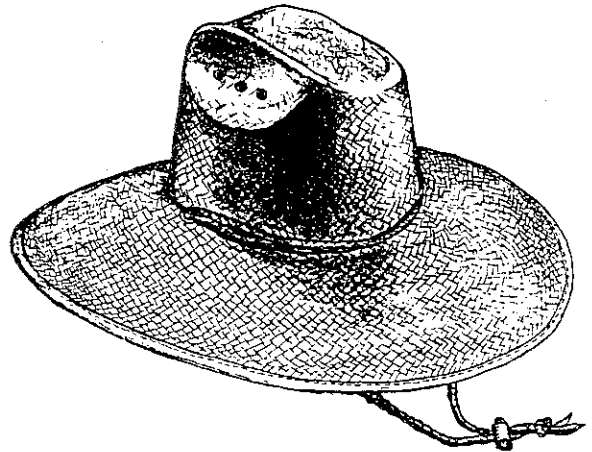
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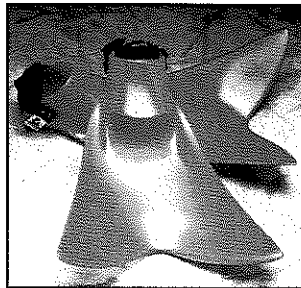
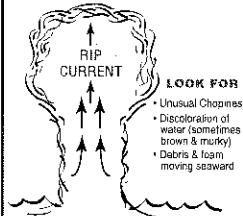
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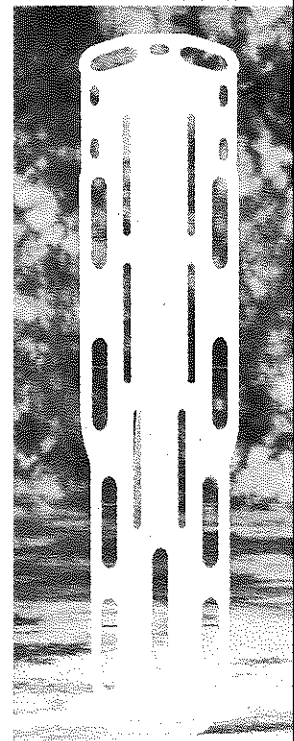
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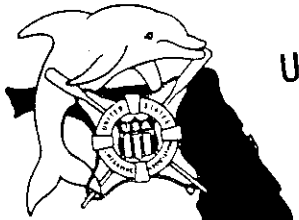
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UNITED STATES LIFESAVING ASSOCIATION Southeast Region

State Certification Update



The most thorough report ever done in this state on the lifeguard profession was completed in September 1993 by Florida's Office of Emergency Medical Services. Of the 300 agencies that were mailed a detailed survey, 125 responded, and 800 individual lifeguards returned comment sheets, giving EMS a large data base to work with. Sandra Hartley, Freida Travis and others at EMS did an outstanding job trying to determine whether lifeguards need regulation and if so, at what level, and how.

A summary of the recommendations made to the legislature regarding just the marine lifeguards were as follows:

1. EMS should have regulatory oversight of marine lifeguards.
2. EMS should continue studying lifeguards for three more years.
3. EMS should develop and implement a standardized reporting form for all lifeguard agencies.
4. The pediatric care component of lifeguards medical training should be reviewed.
5. All lifeguards should be trained in oxygen administration.
6. The minimum standards for a marine lifeguard agency should be those established by the USLA, or equivalent.
7. The minimum standards for marine lifeguards should be a First Responder level first aid course.
8. These recommendations should be phased-in over several years.

"The Office of EMS formulated these recommendations after careful consideration of input from all the lifeguard aquatic environments. Lifeguards' needs, as well as those of the public, will be well-served if these recommendations are implemented... The time has come for Florida to take legislative steps to support the lifesaving efforts of the dedicated lifeguards who serve this state." The USLA Southeast Region, and Florida Beach Patrol Chief's Association strongly supported and lobbied for these recommendations to become law. A complete study of their findings and recommendations is available through the EMS office in Tallahassee.

The proactive effort to have ocean lifeguards recognized as emergency medical providers, with all the protections and concerns accorded EMT's and paramedics, was meant to head off any reactive regulation as had happened to pool guards without their involvement. During the rushed creation of the wording for the study, ocean was dropped so that a comprehensive study, and the opportunities to be offered, would include all lifeguard communities.

During meetings of the Lifeguard Advisory Committee, it became apparent that the issues of year-round ocean lifeguards were not those of the major pool and seasonal constituents, and agreement could not be reached. Two major associations representing these lifeguards had cost and training time on them this year, even though many supportive letters were written.

It is the intention of the USLA Southeast Region to ammend the EMS report to address and include only the marine lifeguard recommendations, and to pre-file the legislation with a Senate and House sponsor. Active lobbying and letter writing will help us to have this effort come to fruition this year, and in the words of EMS "would serve to professionalize lifeguarding and would further enhance Florida's reputation as a 'water wonderland'".

Paul Drucker
Vice President

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Lifeguard Profile —

Tim McKee



"Yo Tim?" The question came drifting up into the guard tower. "Yo, right here" was the response from inside. "Tim McKee?"

"That's McKee" the lifeguard said as he stood to see where the inquiry originated. He was thinking that it might be someone from Philadelphia coming to look him up. Anyone who has seen the movie "Rocky" knows that "Yo" is indigenous to that region. Stepping into the porch of his stand, McKee gazed down at an elderly gentleman, 70 years old, tall and lithe, in generally good shape except for the large Molson muscle protruding over his bathing suit.

"I came by to thank you for what you did for me last week," the man said. Recollection was coming back to McKee, he had seen the man before, but he had looked considerably different then. When last seen, he was on a backboard being carried to a Fire Rescue unit. He was wearing a nasal cannula with wet sand covering his face and hair. He had been blue but his normal color was returning. He was semiconscious.

"You look a little better than the last time I saw you" McKee answered. "Let me tell you what happened", the gent said. "I have Asthma and I had an attack. I tried to get back to the beach but I blacked out." The friends that he had been exiting the ocean with, noticed him floating face down but recognized that as normal behavior for him. "He like to lie face down in the water and get totally relaxed", a pretty French girl he had been swimming with said after the incident. "We didn't think anything of it for a long time, but then he didn't breathe..." Other beach patrons were pulling him the remaining five yards to shore while McKee was running to the unguarded area north of his tower. "He didn't look good, blue lips, mouth full of regurgitated sea water, no breathing or pulse," McKee remembered. After two rounds of 2 man C.P.R. with a young man who identified himself as a pediatric nurse, they got a faint pulse and shallow, gurgled breathing. Rolling him onto his side helped the victim at that point. After a few more minutes with administered oxygen, the man opened his eyes and jerked nearly straight up with a startled look on his face. The expression was somewhat comical, but the large crowd knew it was a good sign.

That was exactly one week ago.

"I almost always have an inhaler with me, but that time I didn't" the man acknowledged. "I know" McKee said. "I found two among your belongings but there was no I.D. for our paperwork. We had to write you up as a John Doe. "What's your name anyway?" "My name is David Stolper. I remember blacking out and thinking that was it for me!" "You look like you've got plenty of good years ahead of you" McKee responded. "I don't know about that" Dave replied, "but what ever I've got, I have thanks to you and what you did." Tim couldn't imagine any words more appreciated, more rewarding, that could be spoken to a professional lifeguard.

Tim was born into lifeguarding, so to speak. His father Al was a guard in Ocean City, N.J. from 1934 to '39 and Al's brothers Frank and Bob were 14 and 8 year guards respectively. "I remember our family returning to the shore, year after year, and dad teaching me how to ride the waves and introducing me to the guards on duty. And I remember the stories he would relate to us about his days on the O.C.B.P.; The dramatic rescues of parachutists blown ashore tangled in their own ropes and of the water shows they used to put on at the old Flanders Pool on the boardwalk, and saving boaters in capsized crafts trying to enter Egg Harbor Inlet during squalls. Little did I realize I would choose that as a profession later in life."

Tim grew up in a family of competitive swimmers, the fourth of nine children. Dad had been a swimmer at Ohio State and excelled to Olympic caliber the year they were cancelled because of World

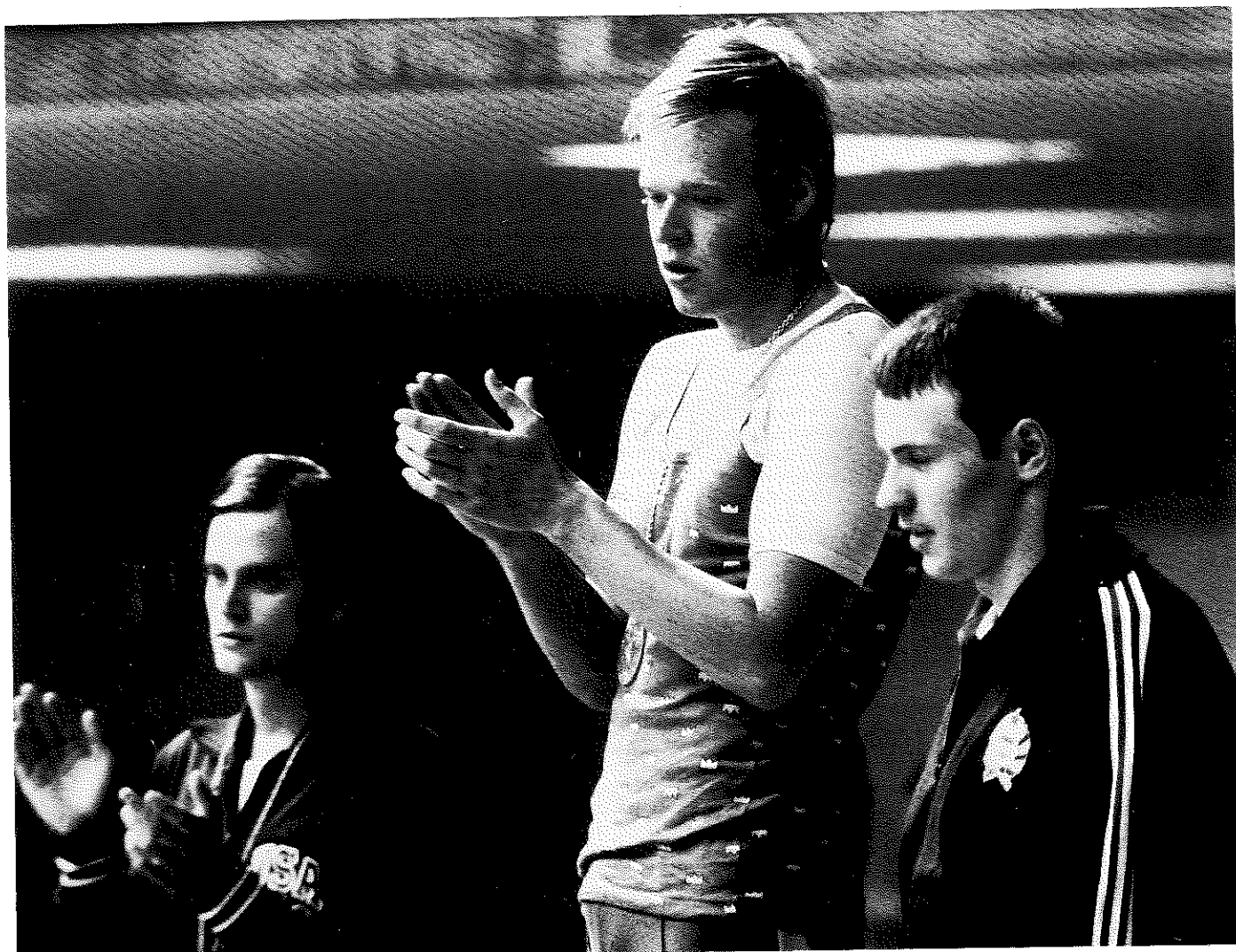
War II. The oldest son Mark was alternate to the Olympic Team in Mexico City in '68. But Dad's Olympic dreams were finally realized when Tim competed in the '72 Munich Games. There he won two silver medals in the 200 and 400 meter Individual Medleys.

"I remember in the the 400, looking across the pool with 25 meters to go, being dog tired but ahead. My arms were still churning, and I thought, 'I'm going to win'. When I reached for the wall I looked across the pool and saw Gunnar Larson from Long Beach State, but competing for his native Sweden, also touching the finish pad. I immediately thought I lost, but my main concern was grabbing the starting block. The water was deep and I had no energy left to tread water. Curiosity forced me to turn toward the data board where I saw a '1' next to my name, and I hung there ecstatic. But I knew it had been close so I forced another turn and saw a '1' next to his name and identical times also. I struggled out of the pool, walked over to his lane to congratulate him, took four or five steps back and collapsed from sheer exhaustion. When I came to, the data board remained the same. In all, it took the officials eight minutes to flash up another decimal place. I had lost by 2 / 1000ths of a second. Six months later, because of the controversy surrounding the race, they determined that the timing equipment was not accurate to that degree, even if they could measure and build a pool to specifications of 3 millimeters, the distance that I had lost by. So they changed the rules and now award duplicate Gold Medals but they didn't make the ruling retroactive. C'est la vie."

Ironically a girl Tim had coached, Nancy Hogshead, was involved in the next similar situation and awarded a duplicate Gold Medal in the L.A. Olympics in '84. "I suppose it's like my dad always said, back when they used judges on the side of the pool to determine place finishes, 'Tim, if you want to win, you gotta win big'. Anyway, it doesn't matter much, my life wouldn't change with a gold, but it might have affected my thinking when I decided to come out of retirement for the '76 Montreal Games. I saw the American Nationals from the bleachers in '75 and nobody was swimming any faster in the 400 than I had in '72. I figured that if I trained real hard and stayed healthy, if everything went my way, I could swim 4:24 seconds in Montreal. The world record was 4:30. So I committed myself and people started coming out of the woodwork. I was the top American at the Long Beach Nationals in March '76 with an American Record and three Hungarians finished ahead of me. What are the chances of that? Anyway, to make a long story a little longer, I swam my 4:24 at Montreal and Rod Strachan swam 4:23." These days McKee shows no regrets and reflecting on those experiences he says he was lucky to be there. "It was a tremendous experience. The Olympic village and arenas are unique environments and seem to have an electrical charge in the air. I'll always be grateful for the opportunities of camaraderie and the chances to experience traveling the world and interacting with its international cultures. I got my education paid for and although I wasn't in it for the notoriety, I guess I got some. I'm the closest loser in the history of sports" he says smiling.

Tim began lifeguarding for extra money at pools but graduated to Beach Patrol in South Jersey. "I got started on the beach with several school pals in Avalon. It was an upper middle class resort for Philadelphia, and relatively quiet, only five liquor licenses in town. We'd pretty much work the same stand throughout the

continued...



Tim McKee — Receiving Olympic Silver Metal

summer and the locals would bring you lunch and invite you to Bar-B-Quees after work.

We worked for a real hard nosed Captain, Murray Wolfe, who would mortgage his house for his guys if they were in trouble. We had nick names for him but never to his face. All the guards were real loyal to him and it scared the hell out of the local politicians. They fired him and tied him up in court for nearly a year before he won his job back. He's still there 20 years later.

I used to love the rookie boat races each year, first year guards trying to handle several hundred pounds of surf dory in the surf. One or two would always flip sometimes burying the guards underneath. It was probably quite dangerous, but valuable as a rite of passage and nobody was exempt.

But my favorite memory was Danny Leonard's first annual South Jersey Tilling Competition. All competitors were on call for a two week wave window and it had been flat for twelve days. Then the surf began to build and by late afternoon wave faces were over ten feet with winds straight off shore. Everbody knew Boomer Blair was the best dory tiller, especially Boomer, he was our Captain. That was the year Murray was in court. Boats from Brigantine to Cape May showed up and judging was surfing style; wave difficulty times style points. We all witnessed an incredible exhibition that day. Blair did admirably with ten foot curls dumping on his head but some kid whose name escapes me now was shredding eight footers, up and down faces outracing the lip. It was like he had a fixed rudder and he showed tremendous strength and maneuverability in critical situations. Boomer boomed "My waves were bigger" and Danny said calmly "We told everyone the judging system" and the

decision held. Boomer is probably still in Atlantic City and Danny is F. Lee Bailey's law partner."

McKee went back to the University of Florida and next summer took what some considered a grown-up or real job, a 9 to 5. A couple of Asbury Park guards called and suggested that Tim and his brother Chris come up from Philly to work weekends. It turned out that Asbury Park was quite concerned that the bulk of the central Jersey Aquatic Club was also on the payroll of the Long Branch Beach Patrol and that Asbury Park was in jeopardy of losing for the first time a competition they hosted each year. Ringers were part of the game in the league.

"They had some unique events' McKee recalls. "My favorite was the row-swim where the stern man would dive out after passing a flag line and swim to shore." The Asbury dynasty remained intact.

There were other interesting aspects of that job. "Saturday nights all the guards would work as security at Convention Hall, an auditorium built on a pier off the boardwalk. We'd seat the first show then pound some beers at the lean-to, our name for a hole in the wall across the street, or go to the Stone Pony to see Springsteen. When that first show let out we'd set up a row of chairs in front of the front row. Our guests for the show included anyone whose name we left at the front door so it wasn't uncommon for a guard to have three or four dates that night. Besides, we had to fill up the front row." Sundays were a bit different. "In the afternoon the Captian Joe Paloto would hop on a rental surf raft, his operation run by another guards girlfriend, and paddle beyond the surf where a boat would be waiting after coming in off the shoals. Joe would hand up a roll of \$5 bills, and

continued...

for everyone the boat skipper would pile into a net sack a dozen Maine lobster to big to get out of the traps. Joe had a steam in beer recipe, a keg, and lobster fest concluded each weekend. After such an exhausting two days, the drive back to Philly was long and tedious on the dark central Jersey roads and occasionally we'd sleep on the side of the road."

Tim returned to the University of Florida after the Montreal Olympics and with Randy Reese out of Jacksonville began to rebuild his alma mater's swim program. "When we took over the program there wasn't anyone on either team who could qualify to go to the NCAA Championships." Within four years the women's team were National Champs twice and the men had made it to third. Their club team, the Florida Aquatic Swim Team were National Champs in both divisions. That was the year president Carter cancelled American participation in the Moscow Olympics because Russia had invaded Afghanistan. Based on current national rankings at the time, between over a third and possibly half of the Olympic Team would have consisted of F.A.S.T. members. I felt terrible for the kids. Our program was diverse to keep it interesting, but there is no escaping the amount of grueling work these athletes were put through. This was before corporate sponsorship for athletes and these kids excelled at their willingness, motivation and focus. To see politics rearing an ugly head and cutting off their opportunity to compete at the Olympic level just seemed stupid."

Some of those athletes incredibly enough maintained their drive for four more years. Rowdy Gaines, Nancy Hogshead and David Larson all won gold in L.A. in '84.

In 1982 McKee was working in business in Coral Gables, Florida. He was vice-president of Pollution Solution Marketing and consultant for Florida Power Management. "It was honest work, the kind you could feel good about. All of our products were environmentally conscious and a win-win situation for both the customer and the company. But something was missing for McKee "I had always been athletic, and I found myself 20 pounds overweight and it was questionable whether I could run around the block and recover in the same 15 minute period. It was a little scary extrapolating where I would be in ten years at that rate. And I wasn't able to find time to recreate myself."

***"I'll always be grateful
for the opportunities
of comraderie and
the chances to experience
traveling the world and
interacting with its
international cultures.***

That's about the time a pair of old age group swimming pals started relating the benefits of working on the Miami Beach, Beach Patrol. Bill and Rich Dorney who swam on McKee's club team in Philadelphia told him about being able to run, swim, surf and have time to yourself, and all on the job. "From where I was thinking at the time, that sounded pretty good to me. And it was a job I could leave at the office! You might say that I traded in my three piece suit for a bathing suit. The consolation prize is living a life I love.

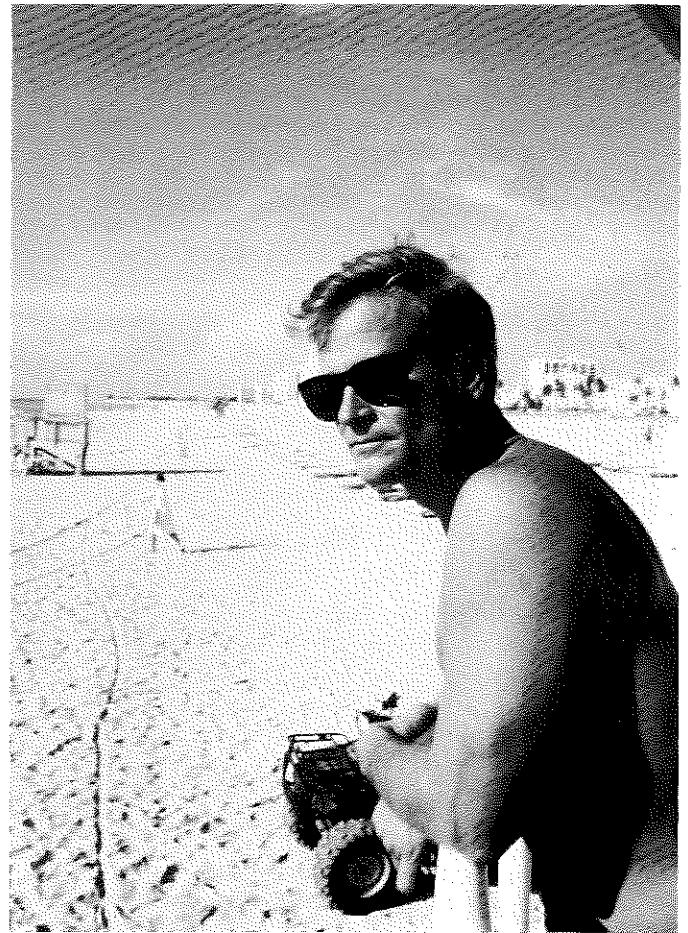
Miami Beach has changed considerably since then. From the sleepy pace of what the local officials termed a "blighted neighborhood" in 1982, Miami Beach has blossomed into America's Riviera according to Time Magazine. International travel guides are raving about it being the place to be. It has become the new jet set scene.

The fashion and film industries are continually expanding. According to McKee, "In the winters, South Beach has the highest concentration of fashion models in the world and the people who issue permits say no less than 13 films will be produced locally this year. Celebrities are buying homes and establishing businesses and real estate is going through the roof."

And how does Tim feel about this recent growth? "Well the beaches are considerably busier than when I started, so there's more work and less opportunity for the things that initially attracted me here. But I've been able to purchase seven condominiums and they are beginning to pay themselves off, so that's an even trade. As far as the neighborhood, I love it, incredibly interesting urban living at its finest. I can't think of anywhere I'd rather be. For a guy that has water in his veins, this is it."

So Tim spends his days nestled in the 14th Street lifeguard tower watching over tourist and locals alike. Here comes one now.

"Yo, Tim."
"Yo, right here."



Tim McKee — A Professional Lifeguard Up Close & Personal





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Ocean Lifeguarding and Beach Safety on Panama City Beach Past, Present and Future

By Gregg Wolfe and George Stevenson

Panama City Beach, Florida, is known throughout the world for its spun-sugar sand and jewel green waters, blending southern small town character with a slight cosmopolitan flair. Encompassing 27 miles of what is called "the Worlds Most Beautiful Beaches", Panama City Beach is considered the second most popular destination of automobile visitors to Florida, trailing only to the Orlando / Disney World area. Panama City Beach has also become the number one location for College and University Spring Break due to its beauty, good seafood and great night clubs. In 1992 Panama City Beach was named the top domestic beach for value by The News Travel Network. Although there are numerous other attractions, water activities are the most popular. Swimming, snorkeling, SCUBA diving, Jet Skiing, boating, para-sailing, wind surfing and fishing rank among the top.

Lifeguard protection on the beaches of Bay County has historically been a unique situation. The beach originally had a single privately owned pavilion that lasted through the 1950's. An enclosed lifeguard tower was constructed on the beach as part of this facility and lifeguard protection was provided. Other motels sprang up along the adjacent beach. Additional protection for swimmers was needed but seldom provided.

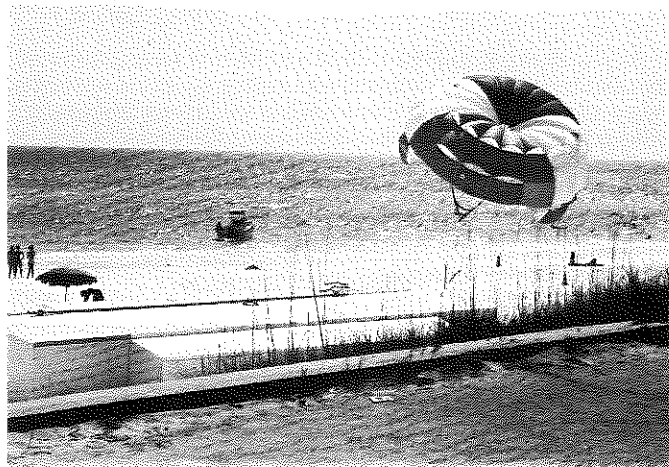
Vendors of various kinds began to solicit business between the waters' edge and the motels. In the 1960's an ordinance was passed by the city of Panama City Beach that required anyone employed in selling or renting on the beach to be a certified Red Cross Lifeguard. Until very recently, these certified vendors were used as lifeguards while simultaneously selling beach supplies, renting beach chairs and recreational watercraft (*waverunners / jet skis / para-sails*).



Lifeguard Stand and Flag in background - County Pier

Many of the Red Cross Lifeguard Training Instructors would expand the normal instruction to include some ocean rescue practice. In these short exercises the new lifeguards were indoctrinated to ocean lifeguarding. A program was started in 1987 called Surf Rescue. A number of surf rescue classes were held and were well received. The program was eventually abandoned because the beach services were only required to employ people who were certified in Lifeguard Training.

Due to the tremendous growth Panama City Beach has experienced over the past ten years, an increase in the number of water activities, a concern for beach safety has become a priority for beach administrators and law enforcement agencies. The development of a flag warning system identifying water conditions and the implementation of new city and county ordinances which strictly regulate watercraft and para-sail rental businesses, demonstrates the commitment to safety.



Para-Sails on Panama City Beach - May 1994

It is evident through the numerous professional Beach Patrols throughout the state of Florida that the most effective way to prevent drownings and other related marine accidents is to have well trained Ocean Lifeguards on the beach. Each year thousands of lives are saved by Ocean Lifeguards and many more accidents are avoided by their preventative actions. There are many people alive today who owe their very existence to the vigilance, skill and stamina of a beach lifeguard.

The next step towards safety on Panama City Beach is to establish an Ocean Lifeguard training system and employ skilled USLA Ocean Lifeguards to protect the well being of its visitors and to improve the quality of their visit to Panama City Beach.

The biggest hazard to beach visitors on Panama City Beach is rip current. According to local statistics between May of 1982 and June of 1991, 36 drownings occurred which were directly caused by rip current. "It is estimated that between 30 and 40 people a year die from rip current drowning in Florida. According to Florida annual statistics this makes rip current more deadly than Hurricanes, Tornadoes, and lightning combined." (*James Luchine, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.*)

In recognition of the need for well trained Ocean Lifeguards, Gulf Coast Community College has joined hands with The United States Lifesaving Association and is in the process of establishing the newest Chapter of the USLA known as "THE EMERALD COAST CHAPTER" (Southeast Region). The goals of the Emerald Coast Chapter are:

1. To develop and maintain an Ocean Lifeguard Training program according to the standards and guidelines established by the United States Lifesaving Association.
2. To train ocean lifeguards and establish the highest standards possible in Lifesaving techniques.
3. To develop a beach safety education program and effectively educate the public on all aspects of water safety.
4. To assist surrounding counties in the Panhandle of Florida in the development of an Ocean Lifeguarding program in their area.

In closing, The Emerald Coast Chapter would like to extend a special thanks to John Fletemeyer, Paul Drucker and all of the Florida Beach Patrols for their guidance and commitment to the development of the new "EMERALD COAST CHAPTER".

The Evolution of the

In prehistoric times, when Fred and Welma were going to the beach, lifeguards were equipped with just the essentials; a metal can buoy, a bathing suit, and a strong desire to protect the public. As lifeguarding evolved, more and more equipment found its way into the profession. Perhaps none so important as the rescue vehicle.

Lifeguard vehicles come in many shapes, sizes and kinds. Despite their diversity, they can be divided into two basic categories -- those that operate on land and those that are designed to float.

Let's begin with land vehicles. Their first appearance on beaches was in the late 19th century and were used by the Coast Guard Service. They were horse or mule drawn carriages designed to transport rescue boats to the water's edge for launching in response to a boat in distress. These vehicles were stationed at many of the houses of refuge located up and down the coast and contributed to saving countless lives at the turn of the century.

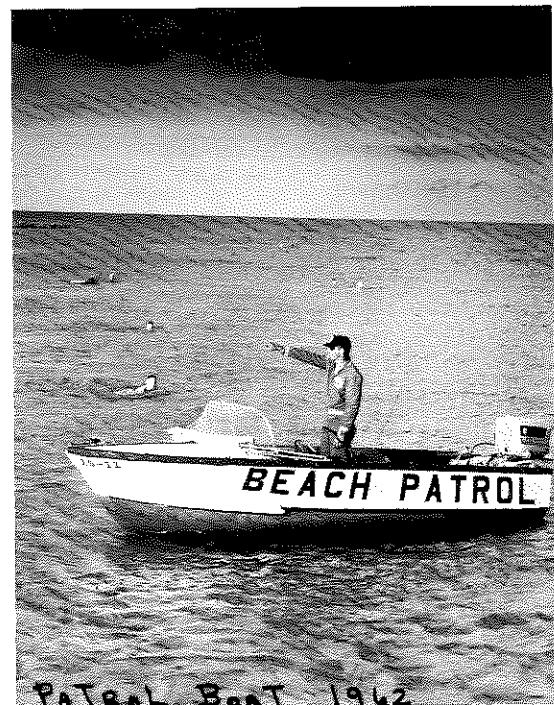
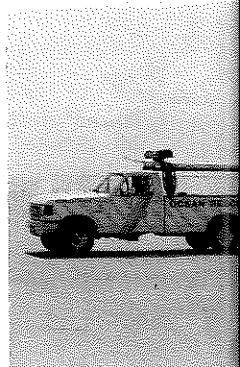
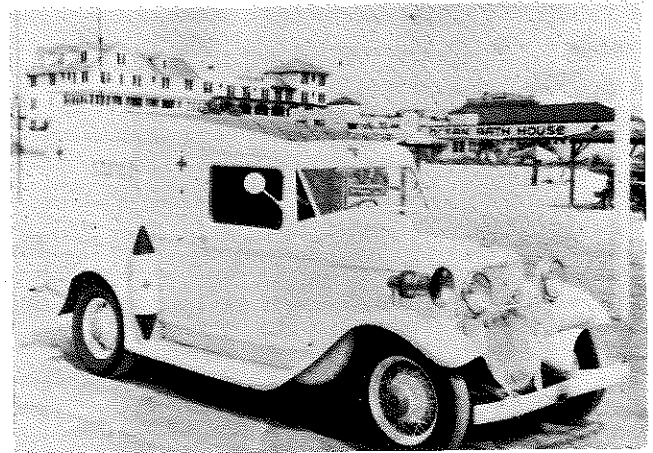
Land vehicles didn't become motorized until the twenties and thirties. By and large, beach vehicles during this period were converted "jalopies" equipped with oversized tires, souped up engines, and high differential gear ratios. The one that appears in this article is illustrative. Crude by modern standards, they were none the less functional as they served to transport men and women and their equipment to the rescue scene.

In the forties and fifties, a new type of vehicle began to appear on the beach -- the trusty and "Sexy" Jeep. Having demonstrated its "metal" transporting soldiers and their equipment to the battlefield, the Jeep was surprisingly easily adapted for service on the sand. The fact that Jeeps were light, economical to operate, and had four wheel drive capabilities contributed to their popularity. Indeed, they were a "better mouse trap".

Although Jeeps continue to see service on many beaches, other vehicles designed for rugged use are finding their way onto the sand. These include, Sidekicks, Blazers, Broncos, Amigos, Rodeos, Pathfinders, Geos, Samurais, Cherokees and Defenders.

Recently another type of land vehicle has been adapted for beach use -- the All Terrain Vehicle or "ATV" for short. Originally they came in three wheel drive models. However, for safety reasons, another wheel was added to improve their balance and stability.

ATV's have a number of obvious advantages over the more traditional "Jeep" type vehicle. They are generally more economical to operate and require less maintenance. Because they are lighter, they can operate more efficiently in soft sand, and perhaps most importantly, because of their small size, they can be driven on crowded beaches without compromising public safety.



Lifeguard Vehicle

By: John R. Fletemeyer



Now let's turn to the second category -- vehicles that float. These include a variety of craft ranging from large fiberglass cruisers equipped with gas or diesel engines to the smaller and more agile inflatable commonly known as "IRB's" (*Inflatable Rescue Boats*).

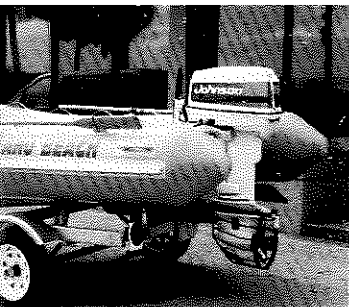
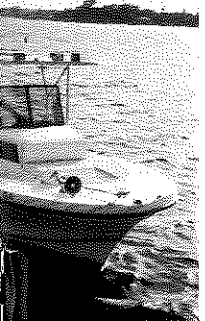
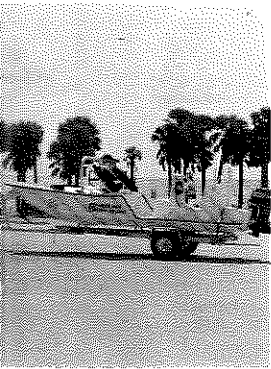
IRB's are preferred by many agencies because they can be launched from the beach. Consequently they can respond to an off-shore emergency at a moment's notice unlike their rigid hull, fiberglass counterparts that must be launched from a dock usually many anxious miles away from the rescue scene. In recent years, IRB's have been strategically stationed at the mouths of ocean inlets; the location of many serious marine mishaps.

Because IRB's require considerable skill and knowledge to operate, special IRB's certification programs have been developed to address the need for training. Graduates from these programs have all the skill needed to respond to the most serious and challenging off-shore rescues.

Recently yet another type of water vehicle has appeared -- the personal water craft. These include wave runners, jet skis, and ski doos. Once considered only for recreational use, PWC's are now considered by many as being indispensable for use in certain types of rescues.

Usually operated by a single lifeguard, a jet ski can literally bust through heavy surf to get to a victim. In some cases, floating stretchers called Stoke's Chairs are tethered behind the PWC allowing a victim to climb on the back and to be towed safely and conveniently back to shore. Over the past couple of years a number of dramatic rescues have been performed by lifeguards using PWC's.

While this article represents only an overview of lifeguard vehicles, I think you get the picture; vehicles represent a necessary and vital part of every agency's equipment arsenal. Having spent a considerable amount of time researching this subject, I'm left wondering if the evolution of beach vehicles has stopped or if it will continue? Knowing and appreciating the creativity and ingenuity of the lifeguard industry, I'm certain that it will continue. So I won't be surprised that someday I'll see an ultralight airplane flying overhead with beach rescue insignias on its wings or a mini submarine surfacing with lifeguard buoys strapped to its sides. Only time will tell!





(L-R): Wayne Courtright, Tim McKee, Pres. Ed Fry, Neal Chapman

Heroic Acts Awards

At a recent USLA meeting, two Miami Beach Firefighters and a Miami Beach Ocean Lifeguard receive Heroic Acts awards for their efforts to save a father and son caught in a rip current on Miami Beach in April of 1993.

USLA-SER President Ed Fry honored Firefighters Wayne Courtright, and Neal Chapman, and Lifeguard Tim McKee who was off duty at the time of the rescue, at their regional meeting on March 24, 1994 at the VFW hall in Miami Beach.

Several dozen MB Firefighters and Lifeguards from all around the state attended the awards ceremony. President Fry cited the cooperation that these heroes showed during the rescue, as a fine example of how the public benefits from a tight Fire / Rescue-Lifeguard alliance.

LIFEGUARD COMPETITIONS Team Florida

Team Florida is an Ocean Lifeguard Competition Team representing Ocean Lifeguards from this state. Team Florida was formed last year for the purpose of participating in the Ocean Challenge Lifeguard Competition. This is a highly televised international ocean lifeguard competition consisting of swimming, paddling, surf skiing, running and beach flags in addition to surf rescue events seen on ESPN in the United States. This international event brought ocean lifeguard teams from around the world to Hawaii last September for five days of intense competition.

This was Team Florida's first year of competing in this event. Some of the countries represented were; Australia, New Zealand, United Kingdom and also teams from California and Hawaii were included. The 1993 Team Florida roster included; Griff Hutton, George Kabris, Scott Hall, Jason Lind, Phil Wotton and Bruce Jennari. This year for 1994's event Team Florida will be selected from the individual winners of ocean lifeguard competitions throughout the state. Individuals will be selected who have demonstrated versatility and athletic prowess in multiple skills. Each team member must be capable of competing in multiple events i.e. Ironman, run swim run etc. type events.

In 1994, Houston Park, who is a Delray Beach Ocean Lifeguard in addition to a Palm Beach County Paramedic, has been selected by the Ocean Lifeguard Challenge organizers to assemble this year's team. Houston has requested the Southeast Lifesaving Association

and Florida Beach Patrol Chiefs Association to provide assistance in the selection of potential team members. The SELA summer sprint series in addition to USLA Regional and National Competitions will provide a field of perspective competitors for Team Florida. It is required that all team members have worked on a Florida beach during the past year.

Team Florida is in need of your assistance and support. There are numerous expenses involved in this endeavor. Most of the costs have been assumed by the sponsors with the exception of the airline travel arrangements. The Florida Beach Patrols Chiefs Association is planning to host a lifeguard challenge locally which may provide financial assistance for Team Florida's goals in September 1994. Your participation and support are encouraged to make this project a success. Please contact your nearest beach patrol, lifesaving association of Florida Beach Patrol Chiefs Association Member for information on how you can send Team Florida to Hawaii this year.



SURFIN' U.S.A. — The Palm Beach Surfing Clinic

By: Julia Hyland, Palm Beach County Lifeguard Training Officer

Surfing is perhaps one of the most exciting and challenging sports known to man (and women)! It dates back to prehistoric times when Polynesian Kings paddled out through the break to conquer giant Pacific Swells on long boards called "Olo" boards. While much has changed between now and then (especially in surfboard designs and materials) the essence remains the same — being at one with a wave.

Despite the growing popularity of the sport, it can sometimes be dangerous, especially for the beginner. To reduce the inherent danger associated with surfing, the Palm Beach County Beach Patrol developed a Surfing Clinic designed for novices and beginners.

Despite its short four year history, it has dramatically gained in popularity and has been responsible for generating considerable "PR" within our community.

Our last clinic was conducted at Carlin Park where 15 enthusiastic young men and women between the ages of 9 and 19 participated. The only prerequisite was learning to say "Kawabunga" and knowing how to swim. Being a good swimmer is absolutely essential; after all you must crawl before you walk!

While learning to surf is the major objective of the clinic, it is not the only one. During the week long course we teach topics that cover conservation and ecology, weather prediction as it relates to the surf, and surf-board repair and maintenance. Additionally, our instructors focus on developing student self esteem and goal attainment — two behaviors that are important in all walks of life.

To maximize safety, our most important concern, special padded "BZ" boards are used. Unlike their fiberglass counterparts that may cause a serious bruise or laceration, these boards tend to be much more forgiving. Only until surfing is mastered on these boards, are students allowed to graduate to fiberglass boards.

During the course, students are required to learn the DO's and DON'T's of surfing. They include:

1. Always wear waterproof sunscreen & stretch before entering the water.
2. Never surf alone.
3. Always use a leash & a surfboard nose guard.
4. Always check local water conditions before entering the water & then check the bottom for dangerous hazards such as rocks and pipes.

5. Never surf near bathers — surfing and swimming don't mix.
6. Always keep your board pointed perpendicular to the wave.
7. Never abandon your board when paddling through the surf break or when a wave is approaching.
8. Always look on both sides before catching a wave to make sure the way is clear of other surfers.
9. Always remain underwater until the wave has passed you by if you wipe out and always surface with your hand on your head to prevent a serious head injury.
10. Never dive head first into the surf if you lose your balance.
11. Learn to identify dangerous marine life and stay clear. Also don't surf in murky water with bait fish present.
12. Watch out for buoy lines. If you become snagged don't panic, simply release your strap and swim free.
13. Learn to identify rip currents. If you get caught in one, never abandon your board. Float out with the current until it weakens and then paddle back to shore.



(L to R): John Fletemeyer, Brandy Brown, and Craig Pollack
Producing "Surfing Safety" Video

Once the students become familiar with these important tips and once they receive some basic instruction on land, they're ready for the water. First they learn to paddle and then they learn to catch waves while remaining in the prone position. Then at last they are ready for that big moment — standing up! Most fall at first, but with a little perseverance they learn the proper technique. This is reinforced by our instructors who surf at the student's side. Learning by example is the best way to learn how to surf.

By week's end most of our students have mastered the surfing basics. Besides leaving with new friends and a new sport to pursue, they have learned something even more important —

The need to conserve the fragile coastal environment.

To date this program and others like it have served to promote lifeguard professionalism. Over 8,000 people are reached by Palm Beach County's Beach Safety presentations. Having played an important role in developing the surfing clinic and other aquatic programs, I feel proud that the most important mission of professional lifeguarding is being realized — that of public safety and education.

EDITOR'S NOTE: In response to the Palm Beach Surfing Clinic, a very unique and entertaining surfing safety video has been produced. Hopefully it will serve as a valuable tool for other agencies to develop their own program. If you know of other unique aquatic safety programs, please consider writing about them for our magazine.

Giant Hammerhead Scares Bathers from Ocean

By: Dennis Ward

On Thursday, January 6th, 1994, my three tower partners and I were enjoying a cool, breezy, sunny day at Carlin Park in Jupiter, Florida. Our chief, Chuck Price had just stopped by to review with me (in the north tower) some details about a rescue a few weeks prior. In the south tower were Andy Bermingham, Ben Demonstranti, and Steve Freese.

An east wind at 10 mph created a small chop on top of a smaller swell. Sixty degree air and a sea temperature around 68 caused most beachgoers to stay out of the ocean. Little did they know there was even better reason to stay out!

At 3 p.m., as a dozen bathers waded nearby, a burst of the surf erupted about fifty feet from shore in the middle of the guarded swimming area. The bathers ran frantically from the water, faster than we could blast our whistles. A three foot baracuda, normally regarded as a **predatory** fish, was jumping three feet clear of the water as it tried to evade its **own** predator. We weren't immediately certain what the predator was, but we knew it was big.

The white dorsal fin broke the surface and rocked swiftly back and forth as it darted after the 'cuda. Many violent surges and splashes ensued as the fish kept changing direction suddenly. They'd go under for a moment, then reappear a little closer to shore. I grabbed my camera and snapped a few shots.

The shark caught the 'cuda in the shorebreak and beached itself momentarily as the surf receded. It was only then that we could clearly see that it was a hammerhead shark, and it was at least twelve feet long. The several hundred beachgoers were riveted as the next wave came and allowed the shark to wiggle free and into deeper water. The two foot dorsal fin slowly disappeared as it descended back into the sea.

The photos weren't good enough to publish. But they are an intense reminder that the ocean can never be assumed to be completely safe. All water activities carry a certain degree of risk. That was probably an old shark who's been out there a long time lurking our waters. For me it's a bittersweet feeling knowing that it's still out there — a threat to my swimmers and me. Yet, I'd feel sad if it were caught, mounted, and hung on a wall somewhere. It was extraordinarily impressive to see such a massive creature in its own habitat, yet so close to mine as well.

It's been out there a long time. That's where it belongs, and I hope I never see it again.



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MARINE DEBRIS

By: Paul Johnson, Director of Fla. Regional Office
Center for Marine Conservation

Marine Debris, or trash on our beaches, is a problem that we are reminded of every time we go to the coast. The garbage that washes up on our beaches and floats in our waters is both ugly and dangerous to humans and marine life.

Aesthetically, marine debris looks terrible and can have a major effect on recreational use in waterfront communities. However, more importantly, thousands of marine animals die each year from becoming entangled in plastic debris or from ingesting plastic, thinking it is food. Divers, swimmers, surfers, surf-anglers, and others can also be injured by sharp or dangerous materials carelessly discarded on or near the water.

Any way you look at it, marine debris is a menace to our environment.

What is Marine Debris?

Marine Debris originates from two distinct sources, the sea and the land. Ocean - or water-based sources include the boats and ships from which people dispose of their garbage over-the-side. Land-based sources include, among other things, combined sewer overflows, stormwater runoff and beach-goers.

For centuries it was common practice for people to dump their garbage at sea. But in December 1987, the United States ratified the international treaty known as MARPOL Annex V (MARPOL stand for MARine POLLution) to ban the dumping of plastic wastes from ships and regulate the distance from shore that all other solid waste materials could be dumped. In order to implement MARPOL Annex V, the U.S. Congress passed the Marine Plastic Pollution Research and Control Act of 1987 (MPPRCA), which applies to both U.S. registered and foreign vessels in U.S. waters.

Recently, it has become more and more evident that marine debris can also come from land-based sources. Among these sources are combined sewer overflows. Usually found in older cities, these sewer systems are combined with stormwater drainage systems. When it rains, and too much water goes into the system, overflows of raw sewage and untreated pollutants from the streets may be discharged directly into waterways. Discharges from land-based sources are subject to regulation under a federal law called the Clean Water Act.

Another group of land-based sources include beach-goers who leave behind their garbage and cigarette butts on the beach to be washed out with the tides or blown into our oceans and bays and back onto our beaches.

Land-based sources also include urban run-off from storm drains. It is a common misconception that the run-off and debris washed down the storm drain is removed at a treatment plant. This debris may actually be discharged directly into local streams, rivers, and bays with no treatment whatsoever. In November 1990, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) issued a final rule requiring cities with separate storm sewer systems to obtain a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit. Cities must apply for this permit to ensure the EPA that their stormwater systems are operating as efficiently and cleanly as possible and that they are educating their citizens about the hazards of dumping debris and other substances down storm drains.



The Dirty Dozen!

The following items have the dubious honor of being the twelve most abundant marine debris items found on the world's beaches during a recent International Coastal Cleanup:

1. Cigarette Butts
2. Plastic Pieces
3. Foamed Plastic Pieces
4. Plastic Food Bags / Wrappers
5. Paper Pieces
6. Glass Pieces
7. Plastic Caps / Lids
8. Metal Beverage Cans
9. Glass Beverage Bottles
10. Plastic Straws
11. Foamed Plastic Cups
12. Plastic Beverage Bottles

How Can It Be Stopped?

Congress has enacted laws to limit the dumping of garbage from boats and to help control land-based sources of marine debris, such as stormwater systems and combined sewer systems. Citizens have also made great efforts in fighting this problem through beach cleanups across the United States and all over the world. The Center for Marine Conservation is the coordinator for the International Coastal Cleanup held every fall. Volunteers clean beaches and collect information on what they find so that sources of marine debris can be targeted for education or pollution prevention campaigns. Specific debris items listed on the data card help to identify sources of marine debris such as galley waste for the kitchens of ships and boats, commercial and recreational fishing gear, operational waste from ships and offshore petroleum industries, sewage outfalls, and medical waste from land-based sources.

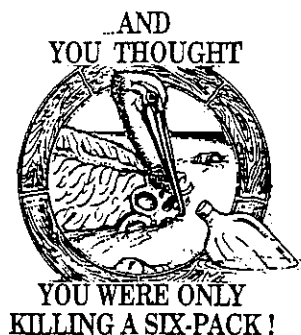
Proper collection is extremely important. Each year the Center analyzes data cards used by over 150,000 volunteers and the results of the analysis become a powerful tool in finding the sources of marine debris, helping to identify solutions, and developing effective pollution control strategies to help prevent the problem.

How Can You Help?

Participate in a Beach Cleanup

This year's coastal cleanup will be held Saturday, September 17th, 1994. To get more information on the problems of marine debris or find out how you can participate in a local cleanup near you, contact the Center on Washington, DC at (202) 429-5609 or in Florida call 1-800-CMC-Florida.

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Surfman of the U.S. Life Saving Service

By Lieutenant Commander Robert V. Hulse, U.S. Coast Guard (Retired)

(Reprinted from Naval History - Spring 1992)

In this present age of rampant greed and glorified selfaggrandizement, I often find it comforting to think back to an earlier era on the coastal beaches of this country—when certain groups of men spent their entire working lives in only one pursuit: saving the lives of shipwrecked mariners. I am referring to the U.S. Life Saving Service, established by a caring federal government to save the lives of imperiled sailors and the passengers in their charge.

Let's take as an example the Blue Point Station (Fire Island, Long Island, New York) where I served in the 1930's. Sitting atop the roof of each two-storied lifesaving station was an observation tower. There a lookout was stationed during the daylight hours to note in his log every vessel that passed. He had a pair of binoculars as well as a spyglass to aid in his observations. Once night had fallen, foot patrols would start out from each station.

These nightly jaunts over the sand were not intended to enhance our physical fitness. Rather, we were required to keep a watchful eye on any ship passing by. If we saw red and green running lights too clearly, it usually indicated that the vessel had strayed too close to shore. If the ship kept on her present course she was bound to plow right into the outer sandbar.

In such a case you had to quickly haul a Coston flare out of your knapsack. A few seconds sufficed to twist off the outer cover and ignite the light. You held it aloft so that the reddish-orange glow would clearly be seen out at sea. The signal burned for a good five minutes. Its clear message was: "You are coming in too close to shore. Change course immediately. You are in danger." (Of course, it was a primitive means of communication, but bear in mind that the radio is a rather recent invention; it wasn't until after World War II that all seagoing vessels carried radio equipment.)

Now assume that you are standing there looking out to sea. You strain your eyes to discern whether the ship has actually changed course and is heading out to open sea. The wind is blowing even harder now, coming in at you off the ocean. You have to brace yourself against it to maintain your concentration. Even as you do you note the running lights have remained stationary. The ship hasn't moved at all! then above the roar of the waves crashing on shore you hear the sound of diesel engines being revved up. There is a definite whine as they strain at their task, then a pause. Now the engines try once more.

The ship has indeed fetched up! Her captain is trying to shake her loose. You look at the luminous dial of your wrist watch. Just as you thought, the tide's going out, and the skipper is in bad trouble. Indeed, the wind is bowing even more fiercely, wedging the ship more firmly onto the sandbar. You ignite another flare. The sight of this one signifies, "You have been seen. Help is on the way."

As you run back to the station, you try and guess how big a ship she is. The bigger the ship, the larger the crew—perhaps even passengers aboard—and therefore a greater number of people to be rescued. You decide to let your captain do all the figuring. He's the boss man: he's paid to do the thinking.

You rush back to the station, open the big front door, and enter. Hurring past the mess hall you reach the captain's quarters. After two quick knocks on the door you fling it wide open. The skipper greets you with a loud snore. Flat on his back, his usually grim face looks relaxed and peaceful. You have to shake him several times to dislodge him from dreamland. He comes to with a snort. "ship's ashore one mile east of the station," you report. He leaps out of bed in the general direction of a chair on which his clothes are draped.

"Rouse out all hands!" he orders, "and hitch up the horse."

"Aye, aye, skipper," you reply.

Rushing topside to the crew's dormitory, you go from bunk to bunk to wake up your shipmates. A minute later and you are outside putting the harness over old Bill, the 16-year-old station horse. He should have been put out to pasture long ago, but here he is once more on a rescue mission. If he could only talk, what stories he could tell!

You lead Bill out of the stable to the boathouse that adjoins the station. Its large doors are being opened by the captain and his number one surfman, Tom Keegan. Soon Bill is hitched up to the four-

wheeled wooden carrier cart on which the surfboat is cradled.

Rolling the cart out of the boathouse is easy. Just ahead, however, is deep, loose sand, and all eight surfmen are now positioned on either side of the cart to keep it moving forward. Poor old Bill would never be able to drag it over to the water's edge without such help. The surfboat weighs a good thousand pounds, and that's not counting the gear.

You and your shipmates have succeeded in rolling the carrier cart down close to the water where the sand is more compact and the going is easier. Bill can handle it better now, but everyone still helps propel the cart along.

Finally, you and your shipmates have drawn abreast of the shipwreck. The rescue attempt is about to begin. Captain Bennett, of course, is in total command; many lives depend on his experience and judgement.

Carefully, you help slide the surfboat off the cart into the freezing cold water swirling around your feet. Captain Bennett is studying the sea. It is he who must decide on the most propitious moment to launch.

Sandy (the number eight surfman and the youngest) has already led Bill and his cart back near the overhanging sand dunes. You see him adjusting the feedbag onto Bill's head and are glad you remembered to bring that bag of oats. That ought to keep Bill happy for a while.

Sandy has returned and all are lined up on either side of the boat. You and the others are knee deep in the numbing cold water, steadying the surfboat whose bow is pointed straight into the ugly, unforgiving ocean. After a split second more of appraisal, your gruff old skipper suddenly roars out, "All right, men, let's go!"

With that you and your mates rush the boat out into the foaming surf. With one last frantic shove, all push the boat forward and quickly scramble aboard. Seconds later the oars are in the thole pins and you and the rest of the crew are rowing away as if your lives depended upon it. And they really do!

"HEAVE on those oars, men," the skipper commands. "All together now men—HEAVE!" As the surfboat crashes her way through the angry, threatening waves, you note that Captain Bennett already has his long steering oar out at the stern and is piloting us toward the stranded ship.



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"Launching the Surf-Boat": An artist depicts the perilous seas through which many life-saving servicemen at the turn of the century rowed their boats to rescue shipwrecked victims.

continued . . .

A persistent punishing wind is contesting every inch of our forward progress—it must be blowing a good 25 miles an hour. But all hands persevere, and as you twist about on your seat to have a look, you see that the ship is indeed quite close now. She is ablaze with lights: every cabin and companionway must be lit, and now an overhead cargo light catches you in its beam. You have to turn away to avoid its blinding glare. The searchlight dances its way across the water to the surfboat as if in a welcoming gesture.

You see that Captain Bennett is steering us in on the lee side of the ship. Drawing even closer now, you see that the ship has a slight list to starboard. She appears to be a small coastal ship, perhaps 1,000 tons.

Drawing alongside, you and the others on the port side have raised your oars out of the thole pins as directed and have lowered them down into the boat. Those on the starboard side are sitting motionless, resting on their oars as the surfboat glides in alongside the ship. A big, burly man on deck has just slung several fenders alongside to prevent damage to our boat. He catches the line slung to him and we are now tied up. At this moment the burly man—who must be the chief mate for he has a gold emblem on his cap—lowers a Jacob's ladder over the side.

The moment the rescue begins, the ship's captain loses his authority; he must submit to orders from our captain. Captain Bennett mounts the ladder. He quickly climbs the seven rungs and steps aboard the ship. He disappears for a good five minutes, then reappears. He descends the ladder and is with us once more.

"Eight are coming aboard," he announces. "Six seamen, the captain, and his wife. Make room for them. They'll be with us in a minute."

The mate appears again and asks our skipper, "Okay to start coming on board, captain?"

"Yes, Mr. Mate, you may proceed," our skipper replies. A slim, young woman slings first one leg and then the other over the side and descends. As she steps off the bottom rung she turns around and faces us. Her face is red and splotchy, her eyes reddened. She has been crying and looks frightened and distraught as Captain Bennett directs her to a bow seat.

Five crewmen and the mate quickly join us. Finally, a weary, disgusted-looking captain of about 45, with a beefy build, takes a last, resigned look at his ship and slowly comes down the ladder. It won't be easy for him to get another command. First there will be hearings at which he must explain just how he managed to lose his ship.

Standing in the bow, Sandy has a boat hook in his hands. You too are on your feet, a boat hook at boat hook at the ready, awaiting orders. The captain turns to Tom Keegan. "Cut the line, Tom," he orders. Tom grabs an ax from the emergency tool kit at his feet, strikes a sharp blow, and we are free.

Directing his attention now to you and Sandy, he shouts, "Shove off, men." The two of you push the boat away from the brightly lit, doomed ship. Quickly, the boat hooks are stowed away. As you take your place, Bennett cries out, "Man your oars, men. Put your backs into it, men. We're headed for home!"

You and your shipmates find rowing toward shore relatively easy. The wind is now whipping us forward toward that bit of sand that offers warmth, shelter, and safety. So far, we've eluded the fury of the sea, but Neptune will soon have another shot at us.

You know full well that the most tricky and difficult part of the whole operation lies just ahead. With the crescendo of waves crashing on shore becoming louder and louder, you realize Captain Bennett has to pick exactly the right wave to ride us in on. If he falters and picks the wrong one, the following sea will crash over us, upending the boat and smashing us all up into one great big mess of splintered wood and shattered humanity.

The noise of the waves is becoming well-nigh deafening. We are extremely close to the point of impact, but Captain Bennett seems to be taking all the time in the world. He's calm and confident; almost carefree. He has slowed the pace of rowing, and we are now just bobbing up and down in that troubled sea.

As you continue to concentrate on your captain, all at once the muscles around his jaw tighten. He looks tough and determined as he shouts in a stentorian tone, "All right, men, in we go! Heave on those oars! Put your backs into it. FAST now, men. In we go, GO!" The great wave picks us up as if we were a bit of driftwood and rushes us forward. It's like we're in a great sluiceway going down, down, down. All of a sudden you hear the boat scraping on the sandy bottom.

"Out of the boat, men," our master orders, "Drag her up on the beach."

Instinctively, we have pulled in our oars and at the same time jumped over the side. You are hip deep in water as you and your mates rush the boat up on shore, just beating out that threatening wave that towered up behind us. We've made it!

The ship captain and his crew have jumped over the side too and are helping. The captain's lady is still sitting quietly at the bow, a little smile on her tear-stained face.

The rest will be routine and a bit boring. We'll have to help Bill haul the surfboat back to the station, and we'll have to help the ship captain, his wife, and his crew make it back there.

But warmth and a change of clothing await us, as do hot coffee and extra rations. It won't take long!

In the foregoing account I've tried to give you an idea of what it was like to be a Fire Island surfman setting out to sea on a rescue mission. There were times, however, when the service's aphorism—"you have to go out, but you don't have to come back"—was totally inapplicable. Storms lashing the coast were sometimes so ferocious that any attempt to launch a surfboat would surely result in the maiming or death of the surfmen, thus negating any chance of rescuing the shipwrecked mariners.

In circumstances of this nature, the life savers had another resource at their disposal, a rather ingenious rescue apparatus—the breeches buoy. To illustrate how this type of rescue equipment was used, assume once again that you are a surfman assigned to the Blue Point station. A vicious Nor'easter has been lashing the coast all night. When last checked, the wind was coming in at 55 miles an hour.

On this bleak December morning you are due to take the first tower watch of the day. Once dawn breaks and chow is over, you will ascend to your lofty perch for four hours of total boredom looking out upon the hostile ocean. At least the snow has stopped, so visibility should be fairly good. Tom Keegan has the galley assignment this week, and you can hear him rattling pots and pans around on the coal-fired stove. The coffee smells good but you hope that today, anyway, Tom will use less grease in frying the eggs. He is the most experienced surfman at the station, our number one man, but he's a barely tolerable cook. Each of us—except, of course, the captain—has to take his turn at cooking. But Tom hates and resents the galley assignment and is apparently venting his frustration by slamming around the kitchenware.

The kerosene lamp on the mess hall table has started to smoke a little and you adjust the wick. It will, you realize, have to be trimmed. At this very moment the front door swings wide open and Sandy stumbles in followed by a blast of cold air and a cloud of sand. He had the last eastward patrol of the night, and the very fact that he has used the front door means something is wrong. To avoid having sand blown or trampled in, the rear door must be used except in an emergency.

Sandy is breathless; he's apparently been running. He finally gets his breath and manages to gasp, "Two-masted schooner aground half mile east."

Captain Bennett, who had been having an early cup of coffee in his office, joins us. "We'll have to use the breeches buoy," our leader decides. "Can't chance the surfboat in this damn weather. Rouse out all hands!"

Breakfast is put on indefinite hold and once again you are dispatched to the stable to hitch up old Bill. As per Bennett's orders, you completely blindfold the horse after putting on the harness. Bill has been through many storms without faltering, but this one is so fierce, the ugly waves so menacing, that if our old nag caught sight of them he might well bolt, carrying the cart away with him.

You have led Bill out of the stable and now have him secured to the breeches buoy cart stored in the boathouse. While this one is lighter than the surfboat cart, it's still mighty heavy, and you and your fellow surfmen have to help pull the cart over the deep sand and down to the water's edge.

On firmer footing now the cart is moving easier. Bill flinches when a wave breaks high and swirls around his hoofs. But a few pats on the head and some words of encouragement in his ear reassure the old veteran and we continue on our way. The sky is much lighter now despite the dark, low-skudding clouds, and you catch sight of the schooner. She seems to be in a bad way. Buffeted by incoming waves and wind, the ship is partly heeled over. She is in danger of breaking

continued...

up in another few hours. You and your mates breathe a collective sigh of relief when you finally draw abreast of the wreck.

First, you and Tom lift the tarpaulin out of the cart and spread it out over the sand where Captain Bennett has decreed that we will set up shop. You and your shipmates go about the tasks that many long weekly drills have made almost second nature. One by one the parts of the rescue equipment are lifted out of the cart and lined up in orderly rows on the tarpaulin.

Next, Tom, Sandy, you, and the captain lift the heavy bronze cannon out and carefully lower it down to its designated spot. To the rear of the gun and beyond the tarp Sandy has joined two others digging a deep hole for the sand anchor. Captain Bennett has dropped down on his hands and knees and is sighting and aiming the Lyle rescue gun, named after its inventor, U.S. Army Colonel David A. Lyle.

Back at the cart once again, you lift out the 18-pound iron projectile with an explosive charge attached to its base. With exceedingly great care you lower the missile down into the muzzle of the gun. At its tip is a protruding iron ring. By this time Tom has lowered to the ground the "faking" box that contains the line which will be shot out to the ship. You grab hold of the end of the shot line and tie it securely to the iron ring. Tom now removes from the box the wooden pins that have kept layer upon layer of the line in orderly rows. The shot line is now free to leap out of the box without fear of snarling or entanglement.

You watch as the captain straightens up, the lanyard in his hands. He's standing now about two feet to the side of the gun. Bennett yanks on the lanyard and the gun explodes in a sheet of flame. In its recoil the gun jumps back a good couple of feet. The projectile hurtles toward the ship, the shot line streaking out behind it. A good shot! The line has landed on the deck just aft of the bow. Attached to the line are small wooden tags with instructions in English, French and Spanish: "Pull on this line."

Captain Bennett has been peering out at the schooner through his binoculars. He nods approvingly and hands the glass to you. Two seamen on board are indeed pulling in the line. As you watch you see them haul aboard the tail block with its endless whip line attached. The two men are reading the instructions attached to the block and are now obediently climbing the mast and tying the block onto it.

Now indeed we can go into action!

The captain, Tom, and Sandy have just tied a three-inch manila hawser onto the whip line. You join the others in hauling in the whip line so that the hawser will be pulled out to the ship. Attached to this stout rope are further instructions: "Tie this line two feet above the block."

Bennett is once again surveying the scene through his glasses. "Good!" he exclaims. "They've tied the hawser onto the mast. We're about ready to go!" With a strong line on board, you know things will move much more quickly. Tom and the captain place the hawser atop a traveler block to which the breeches buoy is attached. Essentially, the buoy consists of a cork life ring with a pair of strong canvas breeches attached.

Next, Sandy ties one part of the whip line onto the far side of the traveler block and attaches the other end of the line to the shore side of the block. Thus there now exists a means of sending the breeches buoy out to the ship. After one of the mariners hoists himself into the buoy by pulling on the other end of the whip line, we can haul him to safety of terra firma.

Tom, Sandy, you, and the captain join three other surfmen in bending the end of the hawser onto the rope that leads to the buried sand anchor. Finally, the ten-foot high wooden "X" beam is raised under the hawser to prop it up and make it more taut and high. At this point Captain Bennett sprints out, "All right men, haul away!" All hands join in pulling on the whip line, which causes the traveler block and its attached breeches buoy to rapidly scoot above those vengeful waves out to the stricken ship.

Once again Captain Bennett has his binoculars trained on the ship. "Okay, men," the captain cries out, "haul away; we've got one of them!" You and your mates now begin to haul away hand over hand to bring the burdened breeches buoy in toward shore. You are glad you remembered to bring your heavy-duty gloves because the line has become iced over. Without gloves, the ice-encrusted line would surely tear into your hands.

As the breeches buoy slowly comes closer to shore, you see the long legs of a man dangling out of the breeches. A high wave slaps up against those legs and temporarily slows down progress. But you and your mates persevere and now the man is quite close to safety, just above the breaking waves.



U.S. Naval Institute Collection
Before the advent of gas-burning engines, hay—'n'—oats—fueled beasts of burden—blinkered to keep them from bolting at the sight of tempestuous waves—drew surfboat carts along the beach.

You and the others rush down to the water's edge to help him in. He is a tall, frightened-looking man of about 55. He looks half frozen, his beard and eyebrows iced over. Likewise, the peacoat he's wearing is a sheet of ice.

Captain Bennett helps the man out of the life ring and asks, "How many more still on board?"

Dazed and half frozen from his ordeal, the man moves his lips, but no words come out.

Captain Bennett steps even closer to him and shouts, "How many on board? I've got to know!"

"Only two more," the man replies in a weak, hesitant voice.

The remaining two crewmen are soon quickly hauled ashore. Shortly thereafter, we pack up our gear and head for the warmth of the station and a celebratory hot meal. Usually, you could expect to find a pot of slumgullion simmering away, but you never quite knew what was in this stew. It all depended on the imagination and ingenuity of those on previous watches. Sometimes you'd find only pieces of rabbit meat. Once in a great while you might find a lamb chop or two that had been spirited from a station galley. Once I was sure I was eating snake meat, for it was quite dissimilar from the prevalent eels. It was very good, despite peoples aversion to the reptile. Whatever landed in your bowl always tasted good and helped prepare you for the next occasion when you'd be called on to assist a shipwrecked party.

The era of rescuing shipwrecked sailors by surfboat or breeches buoy is long gone. Indeed, the U.S. Life Saving Service ceased to exist as a separate organization when, in 1915, it was merged with the Revenue Cutter Service to form the U.S. Coast Guard. The old stations, however, continued to be manned by surfmen who continued to rescue imperiled mariners until the end of World War II.

With the war over and ships free to roam the seven seas without fear of attack by German submarines, a reappraisal of the role of Life Saving stations was in order. The resultant study made clear that the great majority of stations were no longer needed. Improvements in navigation, radar, sonar, and the helicopter combined to render the stations obsolete. Most were sold at auction or torn down. The Life Saving Service as a separate entity existed for only 44 years. During that time surfmen went to the rescue of 178,741 men, women, and children, 177,286 of whom were saved! For those who contend that the federal government can do nothing right, let them have a look at this impressive record!

Lieutenant Commander Hulse retired from the U.S. Coast Guard in 1954 after having served in the European theater of World War II and the Korean War.



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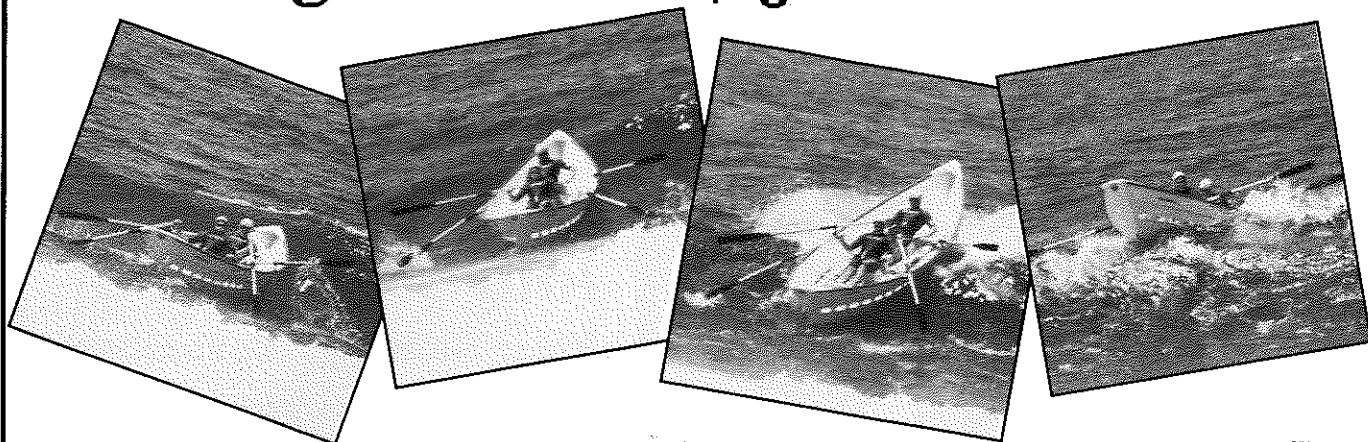
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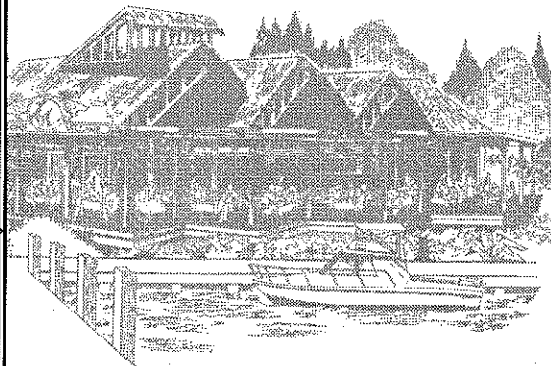
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Debunking the Sea Lice Myth

The latest information on sea bather's eruption

By: G. Yancey Mebane, M.D.

Have you ever emerged from the salt waters of the southern regions with more than the itch to dive again? You know, the burning itch that threatens to spoil your mood, your day, even the remainder of your dive trip?

It happens from time to time, and, if medical reports are an indication, it's increased a great deal over the last few years in the popular waters off Florida and in the Caribbean.

The common symptoms include intensely itchy skin eruptions with small blisters and elevated areas of skin. Found primarily on parts of the body covered by swim wear, these lesions may also appear on the armpits and neck occasionally on the arms and legs.

Most divers and swimmers call it "sea Lice". The term is a misnomer, however. Sea lice are actually fish parasites, do not affect humans, and have nothing to do with sea bather's eruption, which is caused by the larvae of jellyfish.

The primary offender in Florida and Caribbean waters are the larvae of the thimble jellyfish, *Linuche unguiculata*. These larvae, generally half a millimeter in length, can find their way into bathing suits — even passing through the mesh of some suits — and become trapped against the skin and sting.

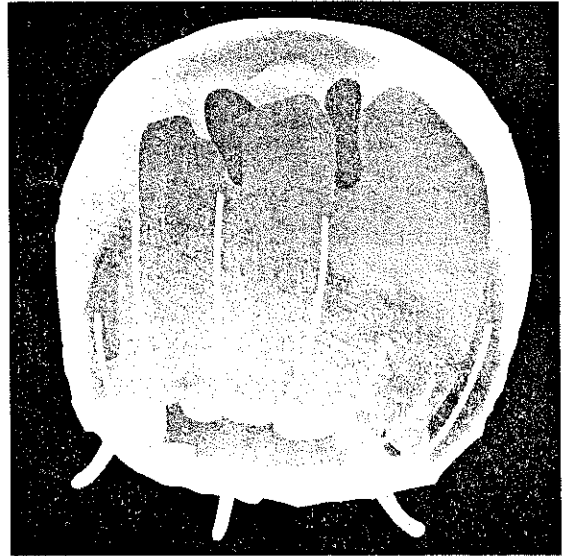
The larvae are visible to the naked eye, but they become nearly invisible in the water. And just because there are no adult thimble jellies in the area is no guarantee that the youngsters aren't around. The best method of identifying then the larvae are about is simply by the appearance of the rash on swimmers or divers.

April through July are the months when the larvae are most prevalent, although they may appear at any time. The symptoms will appear very soon (24 hours or less) after exposure to the organism and will persist for several days. Some cases have been reported which have a three or four-day delay in onset and a prolonged course lasting several weeks.

Symptoms may include, fever, chills, headaches, nausea and vomiting. Severe symptoms occur in children particularly, although adults have also shown similar reactions.

Since many of these symptoms are consistent with many other illnesses, diagnosis is sometimes difficult unless the attending physician knows of the diver's exposure to contaminated water. Often the symptoms are very mild, and other causes may be considered or diagnosed incorrectly at first.

Many of these cases of sea bather's eruption will clear spontaneously, but others may require treatment. Antihistamines and antipruritic (anti-itching) agents may be used, but the results are not good in many cases.



An adult Caribbean thimble jellyfish (*Linuche unguiculata*)

Children and individuals with allergies or diseases affecting the immune system may be at risk for severe reactions. In the severe case, some doctors prefer to use cortisone by tablet or injection.

Prevention for the diver means adequate protection by wet suit or impermeable dive skin. Snorkelers wearing T-shirts, and women wearing one-piece bathing suits are vulnerable because of the trapping action of the fabric.

After diving or swimming in an area where jellyfish larvae are present, remove your wetsuit, dive skin or bathing suit before showering since the fresh water may discharge the nematocysts trapped in the fabric. There have been reports of the condition recurring when the same suit is worn again, suggesting that the larvae may remain in clothing.

If you want more information on sea bather's eruption, a more detailed reference is a paper by R.S. Tomchik, M.T. Russell, A.M. Szmant, and N.A. Black, which appeared in the *Journal of American Medical Association*, 1993; 269: pages 1669-72.

G. Yancey Mebane, M.D., is an assistant professor of family medicine at Duke University Medical School, the associate medical director of Divers Alert Network, and the first medical director of Alamance County Rescue in North Carolina. Mebane has been involved in teaching and diving research for many years.

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Paddleboard Rescue of an Unconscious Victim — An Alternative Method

By: Lt. Shawn O'Rourke



The rescue of an unconscious victim via a paddleboard requires an extraordinary amount of skill and physical ability. The purpose of this article is to provide an alternative method to the traditional "Red Cross" technique. Some of the preliminary steps are the same, however the end results are quite different. In addition to an explanation of the techniques, this text will address the advantages of the 'Alternative Method'.

Some basic principles apply when making any ocean rescue. Due to the constantly varying conditions of the ocean and the infinite number of possible rescue situations, it must be understood that any techniques proposed should be looked at as a basic, fundamental approach and not an ironclad statement as the only way to execute the techniques.

First, let's review the basics of the "Red Cross" technique. Upon reaching the unconscious victim the rescuer begins by flipping the paddleboard over so that the skag is up, or out of the water. This should result in the board being between the rescuer and the victim. The rescuer then must reach over and across the board and grasp the victims hands pulling them up and onto the board. At this point the rescuer must flip the board and the victim over so that the board is in its normal paddling position. This maneuver can be accomplished in a number of ways but usually involves either "rocking" the board or using one knee on the board to gain the leverage necessary to flip the board over. Up to this point both techniques ("Red Cross" and the 'Alternative Method') involve these same exact procedures.

The "Red Cross" technique next asks the rescuer to position the victim on the board face down with both arms folded on the board to support the victims head, which will invariably end up turned to one side or the other. It is absolutely critical that the victim be aligned

properly on the board. That is, they must be placed exactly along the centerline of the length of the board. This position is extremely difficult to attain, yet if not achieved it will be impossible to paddle the victim back to shore without the likelihood of the victim falling off the board. To achieve this proper positioning requires the rescuer to slide the victims torso and both legs across the paddleboard that is "waxed up" to avoid slipping and provide traction. Two balance factors, side to side movement of the board and 'trim' (front to rear stability), must be addressed in order to be able to effectively paddle the victim back to shore. Victims who are particularly large, have a moderate amount of body hair (especially on their chest), or are obese, will significantly compound the difficulty of achieving this desired position.

In the 'Alternative Method', the problems cited above are basically eliminated. Instead of placing the victim on the board face down, once the victim has been brought to the stage where the board has been flipped over, the rescuer at this point will grasp the victims shoulders and roll the victim over so the victim is positioned on his back on the board - face up. Now the rescuer will slide the victims torso (back) onto the board. This will be accomplished much easier because there is much less resistance due to the fact that there is much less surface area of skin contacting the board - namely only the shoulder blades. Also there is much less likelihood of encountering victims with 'hairy backs' than 'hairy chests'. The reduced amount of skin and hair in contact with the waxed surface of the board will make it easier to position the victim.

The next stage of the rescue borrows a strategy from our island brothers - the concept of "outriggers". Instead of trying to place the victims entire body (arms and legs) on the board the 'Alternative Method' requires allowing both arms and both legs to dangle off either side of the board. This dramatically increases the stability of the board in terms of side to side motion. It also reduces the center of gravity of the victim from being distributed over their entire length to only the length of their torso. This aids considerably in achieving a better trim position of the board.

The resulting "face up" position is beneficial for a couple of reasons. First, it puts the victim in an anatomically correct position with a patent open airway. Secondly, with the victim 'face up' they have unrestricted and free chest movement as opposed to the "Red Cross" technique where the chest is compromised by the weight of the victims own body. Additionally there is no turning of the head which tends to occlude the airway of the unconscious victim.

Lastly, with less of the victims body on the board there is significantly more room on the board for the rescuer which should facilitate his ability to paddle more efficiently and effectively.

In conclusion, I believe the 'Alternative Method' proposed here offers the rescuer a much better chance of effecting the rescue of an unconscious victim, as well as providing the victim a greater chance of survival. The 'Alternative Method', I believe, is also a much easier method to perform by the rescuer. Practice both techniques and see what you think!

* * * * *

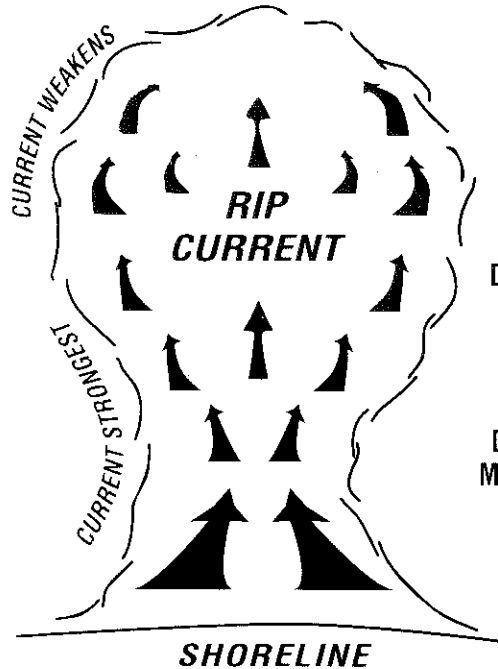
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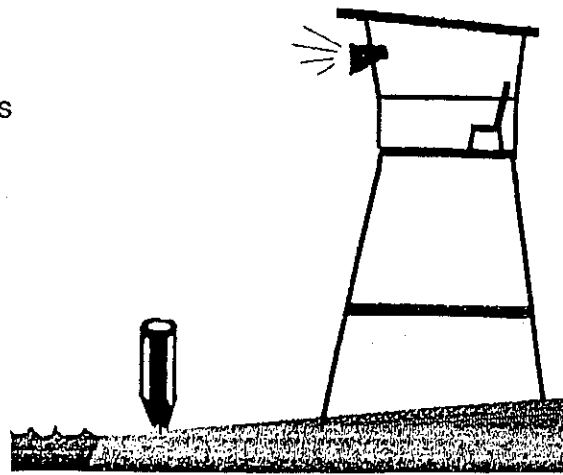
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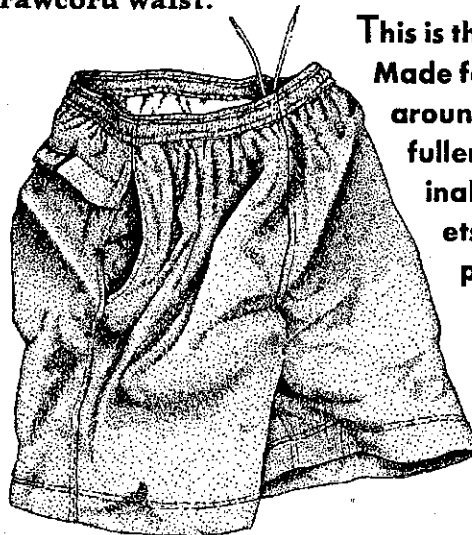
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