

Island News

by John Silberstein,
Maui

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Aloha fellow lifesavers,

I'm the current Supervising Ocean Safety Officer for The County of Maui Beach Lifeguard Department. Our agency recently obtained use of a beachfront house in the town of Kihei on Maui's South shore. The house is located on a point that sits right between two of our guarded beaches. Formerly private property, the building now belongs to the County. Several years ago, the Parks Department fought off developers and purchased the property for about six million dollars. The original idea was to raze the house and include the point area as part of one large park along with the adjacent beach parks. The harsh elements and the even harsher renters took their toll on this dwelling with the prime location. Believe it or not, this property once served as a haven for derelicts and drug abusers!

Point Park and the house sat vacant for years as the Parks Department claimed that a lack of funding prevented them from improving the area. Community volunteers stepped in and began landscaping the point park with native plants. Then they began to make improvements to the structure. Slowly and surely lifeguards and police have been fixing up this house to serve as a substation for both our departments. Much of this work is done without government resources due to the lean economy and tight budgets. Many of us work on the station on our own time at our own expense. We hope to have

restoration of the house completed by this summer in time to use it as our oceanfront classroom for the Junior Lifeguard Program.

I also intend to give the house a "museum of lifeguarding" feeling and that's where you come in. I'm an avid collector of vintage surfing, lifeguard and Coast Guard memorabilia and I'm trying to amass a collection of Ocean Lifeguard patches from around the world. The patches would be part of the display at our new "Hale" ("House" in Hawaiian). If any of you have extra patches from your agency, please send them to me. I'll forward duplicate patches to my former Honolulu Ocean Safety Captain, Paul Merino. He's the Lifeguard Captain at legendary Waikiki Beach. He is also starting a collection for display at his new substation located at the recently restored and historically significant Natatunum War Memorial at Waikiki. This outdoor saltwater pool, made famous by Duke Kahanamoku, served as Lifeguard Headquarters over forty years ago. We will appreciate any patches you can send and will display them proudly.

Thank you and stay safe,
mahalo, A Hui Hou,

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