

President's Message

by Rob McGowan

By the time you read this, another Vernal Equinox will have come and gone, meaning we are well on our way to another summer season on our Southern California beaches. Spring is a time for getting ready for another long hot summer. A time to get back into shape if you've let yourself go over the winter, a time to re-supply the rescue equipment and medical caches, a time for facility repairs, to order the supplies and equipment for another summer. It's time to train a new batch of recruits (we used to call them rookies) to staff the towers to keep the beach going public safe. It's time to plan for another summer of Junior Lifeguards, one of our best public education tools. It's all of this and much more, and this year, due to budget cuts, many of us are going to have to do a lot more with fewer resources, and in an El Niño year to boot!

The members of your Executive Board have been busy over the winter getting ready for another summer. We've been working with our marketing consultant, SHP, Inc. to acquire the things necessary to have another successful membership campaign and California Surf Lifesaving Championships. On top of that, our region is sponsoring the Spring 2003 USLA National meeting in Hawaii. Chris Graham has done an excellent job of organizing the meeting and it should be one of the best of all time. The dates are May 8th through 10th at the Outrigger Reef Hotel on Waikiki Beach. Check the events section of the CSLSA website (www.cslsa.org) for complete details.

Your Executive Board has been working to bring our marketing contract with SHP, Inc. into conformance with the USLA by-laws. It is the opinion of the USLA legal advisor that the CSLSA, as a region of the USLA, did not have the authority to enter into an independent marketing agreement like the one we have with SHP without the consent of the national body. Bill Richardson is working directly with SHP's attorney to resolve the contract issues in a manner that is acceptable to all parties concerned. SHP is interested in entering into a marketing agreement with the entire USLA, so hopefully the issues can be resolved and we can move forward. It seems like a win-win situation for the USLA and SHP if logic and a spirit of compromise can prevail.

Our Spring CSLSA Board of Directors meeting will be held April 24 and 25, 2003, at US Ocean Safety in Laguna Beach. The County of Orange Lifesaving Association will host the event. More detailed information should be available very soon.

Upcoming competition events include the 2003 California State Games at Imperial Beach (tentative) on July 11 and 12, 2003, and the 2003 California Surf Lifesaving Championships scheduled for July 25 and 26 in Los Angeles County. As of this writing, the Junior Lifeguard Regionals will be at Santa Monica on Friday the 25th, followed by the Lifeguard events at Zuma Beach on Saturday, July 26th. The decision to return to Saturday for the lifeguard events was based on sponsorship concerns, and was not without controversy. The issue came to a vote at the Fall Board of Directors meeting in Del Mar, and Saturday won out by the narrowest of margins. We need to keep in mind that sponsorship is key to the success of our Regionals, and we must do whatever we can to keep the sponsors satisfied. Other competitions include the Taplin, hosted by L.A. County on Saturday, August 2nd, and the USLA Nationals in Cape May, New Jersey on August 7, 8, and 9, 2003. Few details are available at this time, although there is a link to the Cape May Chamber of Commerce, featuring accommodations options at the Cape May Beach Patrol site, www.capemaybeachpatrol.org. The Cape May locals have advised me that the hotels fill up quickly, so if you are planning on going, you should make reservations as soon as possible. A few of decisions were made at the last USLA National meeting that will affect this summer's competition. Due to rule changes that were adopted, the Women's Open Surfboat Race is now 2 laps instead of one, and the "non-professional" members no longer need to donate 24 hours to their chapter in order to compete. There will be an "Under 18 Professional Division" classification at USLA Nationals on a trial basis this year. This will be a sub-division of the Open Men's and Women's categories, is be non point scoring, and will award a first place medal to the top under 18 year old male and female competitor in the Swim, Run-Swim-Run, Rescue Board, and 2 K Run events. Junior Lifeguards are not eligible.

Our California-New Zealand Exchange lifeguards, Lindsay Ortega from Huntington City, and Rebecca Levine of Huntington State had a great trip to New Zealand this winter. They spent the entire month of January visiting at least ten different surf clubs in New Zealand, they "passed the NZ Surf Lifeguard exam with flying colors," and were featured in a newspaper article with a half page photo on the front page. Way to go girls, we hope to get a full report at the CSLSA Spring Board of Directors meeting. The details of the 2003-2004 exchange has been published by committee chair Chris Graham. This will be the 31st annual exchange between California and New Zealand and all materials from prospective applicants must be received by August 27, 2003, with an oral interview to follow. For more information contact Chris Graham at (949) 770-1313 x 203, cgraham@lakemissionviejo.org, or www.cslsa.org "exchange programs."

I look forward to seeing you at our Spring meeting in Laguna, or if not there, on the beach at the Regionals or the Taplin. Until then, be safe and keep 'em alive.