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LIFEGUARD[®]

A United States Lifesaving Association Publication

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president@usla.org

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Charleston, SC
secretary@usla.org

Executive Delegate
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Charleston, SC
executivedelegate@usla.org

Liaison Officer
Coral Kemp
Los Angeles, CA
liaison@usla.org

Advisor
Peter Davis
Galveston, TX
advisor@usla.org

Medical Advisor
Dr. Peter Wernicki,
Vero Beach, FL
medicaladvisor@usla.org

Legal Advisor
Paul Maier
New York, NY
legaladvisor@usla.org

USLA Executive Director
Karissa Fleming
ed@usla.org

USLA Regional Presidents

New England
W. James Farrell III
nepresident@usla.org

Mid-Atlantic
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mapresident@usla.org

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nwpresident@usla.org

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Gus Avila
swpresident@usla.org

Pacific Islands
Kalani Vierra
pipresident@usla.org

USLA Special Assignments

American Lifeguard Magazine
B. Chris Brewster
alm@usla.org

Bylaws and Policies
Mike Wagner
bylaws@usla.org

Certification
B. Chris Brewster
certification@usla.org

Conference Planning

Michael Bradley
conference@usla.org

First Responder Advocacy
Mat Giachetti
firstresponders@usla.org

Lifesaving Legends
Jim McCrady
legends@usla.org

Heroic Acts Awards
Adrienne Groh
heroicacts@usla.org

Junior Lifeguards
Bruce Wilkie
juniorguards@usla.org

Lifesaving Sport
Skip Prosser
lifesavingsport@usla.org

Medical
Dr. Peter Wernicki
medicaladvisor@usla.org

Membership
Monty Reed
membership@usla.org

Public Education
Denise Blair
publiceducation@usla.org

Public Information Officer
Tom Gill
mediarep@usla.org

Sponsorship Development
Ed Zebrowski
sponsors@usla.org

Statistics
Rick Gould
statistics@usla.org

Ways & Means
Dan McCormick
treasurer@usla.org

Women of Water
Cathy VonWald
womenofwater@usla.org

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Editor: B. Chris Brewster

Do you have a story or a photo you'd like to contribute?

Contact the editor at: alm@usla.org.

United States Lifesaving Association

www.usla.org 866-FOR-USLA (367-8752)

We are America's nonprofit, professional association of beach lifeguards and open water rescuers. The USLA works to reduce the incidence of death and injury in the aquatic environment through public education, national lifeguard standards, training programs, promotion of high levels of lifeguard readiness, and other means. Corporate address: 1968 S. Coast Highway, #740, Laguna Beach, California 92651.

American Lifeguard Magazine™

American Lifeguard Magazine™ is the official magazine of the USLA, mailed March 1, June 1, and October 15 to about 7,000 members and subscribers. The opinions expressed are those of the contributors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the USLA. We welcome stories, photos, and advertising which target our audience of athletic, beach oriented people. Our junior lifeguard members range in age from 8 - 18, with an average age of 12. They are about 55% male, 45% female. Our lifeguard members (professional, alumnus, and life) range in age from 16 to over 85, with an average age of 29. They are about 75% male, 25% female. Readers include lifeguard agency chiefs, junior lifeguard program administrators, and others involved in purchasing decisions. Promote your products and services by delivering your message directly to lifesaving professionals through the only magazine targeting beach lifeguards in the US. We rarely pay for articles or photos, but give full credit. We pay \$100 for cover photos.

Deadlines for contributing stories, photos, or advertising to ALM are March 1 (summer edition), July 15 (fall edition), and December 1 (spring edition), unless a later date is approved by the editor.

Address all inquiries to the editor at: alm@usla.org.

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Cover Shot: In 1971, Joyce Hoffman, a highly accomplished competitive surfer, was hired by Del Mar as one of the first female ocean lifeguards in California. She is one of the extraordinary women lifeguards profiled in the book *Guarded*, an excerpt of which can be found in this edition of ALM. Photo: Tom Keck

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

USLA Family,

Welcome to summer! After a harsh winter for many, the beaches are filling again with vacationers and those lucky enough to live along US coastlines. Thank you for the critical role each of you will play in protecting the millions of visitors to our shores this season.

As you know from experience or from your recent training, no one can do this job alone. It takes coordination, communication, and commitment to the mission at hand to make sure everyone returns home safe at the end of the day.

Your membership in the USLA provides an additional team of lifesavers supporting you from behind the scenes. There are different committees that focus on all aspects of open water lifesaving.

For those in a certified agency (you can find a list in this issue), your training is based on standards set after exhaustive study and research of best practices for open water lifesaving. The National Certification Committee has added certifications for agencies providing personal rescue watercraft (PRWC), beach emergency vehicle operations (BEVO), and aquatic rescue response teams (ARRT).

In addition to all that, the USLA Board of Directors has just approved a new guideline entitled, "Contaminated Water Protection," that guides agencies on how to protect their rescuers from the effects of contaminated water. It's based on an extensive scientific rationale. Both can be found on our website. More details in an article in this issue.

The USLA Public Education Committee works to educate the nation about ocean and beach dangers and provides a plethora of resources to assist in providing beach safety lessons. The Heroic Acts Committee reviews submissions of great rescues and



accomplishments by lifeguards and non-lifeguards, and awards them appropriately.

The Membership Committee puts together the packet of materials you receive in the mail with your membership card, as well as a gift each year (hope you like the hat). The Junior Lifeguard (JG) Committee is setting parameters for JG achievement, program development, and awards for top JGs.

Lifesaving Sport continually updates event rules and oversees conduct of the annual USLA Lifeguard National Championships for guards and JGs. In addition, they select our National Team staff and assist with competitor and staff development as they represent the United States in international competition.

There are also working group and special committees convened to deal with issues and points of service. All of these committees are meant to serve you and your fellow guards.

To better serve you, I ask for your assistance with two items. Number one, recruit your fellow guards to join the USLA. The larger the membership, the more financial, political, and organizational strength we have to better accomplish our mission on your behalf each year.

Second, participate! Enter a competition, sit in on your local or regional meeting, provide public safety presentations to local schools and organizations, or all of the above.

In the Lifelines section of this edition, you'll learn a bit about the USLA Fall Expo in Jacksonville, Florida. The combination of Board Meeting, expanded Educational Conference, and Vendor Expo, plus a National Awards Banquet (November 11) will give every member a reason to attend!

I look forward to seeing you at a USLA event this year and hearing about your service as a lifeguard and a USLA member.

Lifeguards For Life!®

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tom Gill". The signature is stylized, with the first letters of the first and last names being large and prominent.

Tom Gill
President
United States Lifesaving Association



CRAIG DODSON – LIFEGUARD OF THE YEAR

Craig Dodson of Wrightsville Beach Ocean Rescue was selected as the 2025 recipient of the United States Lifesaving Association's Ben Carlson Lifeguard of the Year Award, recognizing exceptional dedication, leadership, and service within the lifeguarding profession. The annual award is presented in partnership with the Ben Carlson Memorial & Scholarship Foundation.

Many of our readers may already recognize Dodson's name through a feature article highlighting his community outreach and leadership efforts at Wrightsville Beach in the fall 2025 edition of ALM. The qualities and characteristics shared in the article were a preview of Dodson's holistic excellence.

At Wrightsville Beach Ocean Rescue, Dodson has demonstrated leadership both on the beach and through youth development programs. As a leader within the Captain Jeremy Owens Junior Lifeguard Program, he mentors young participants in beach safety, CPR, rip current awareness, and teamwork, helping prepare the next generation of lifeguards, while reinforcing a culture of professionalism and preparedness within the patrol.

Dodson's work also extends beyond daily patrol duties. As an ambassador with the Swim Global Project, he contributes to broader drowning prevention initiatives while continuing to organize beach safety workshops and CPR education in schools and community organizations.



Colleagues credit his calm demeanor during emergencies, strong communication skills, and commitment to mentoring younger guards as qualities that exemplify the spirit of the award.

During his acceptance remarks, upon receiving the award at the USLA fall Board of Directors meeting, Dodson humbly reflected on the path that led him to lifeguarding. He spoke about entering the profession later in life



*Craig Dodson on the beach.
Photo: Gary Quesenberry*

after learning the story of Newport Beach lifeguard Ben Carlson, whose sacrifice in 2014 continues to inspire lifeguards around the world.

Dodson said that he feels fortunate to be “standing on the shoulders of giants” who came before him in the lifesaving profession and expressed deep appreciation for the mentors and teammates who helped shape his career.

The Ben Carlson Memorial & Scholarship Foundation generously

supported Dodson's work with youth education by donating to the Wrightsville Beach Junior Lifeguard Program, helping expand opportunities for young people to learn water safety and lifesaving skills.

Nominations are now open for the 2026 USLA Ben Carlson Lifeguard of the Year Award and will be accepted through August 21 at USLA.org/lifeguard-of-the-year. The next recipient will be honored during the USLA National Lifesaving Conference & Expo Awards Banquet in Jacksonville, Florida on November 11, 2026.

New this year, a \$2,500 support grant will also be awarded to the agency, chapter, or region that nominates the winning lifeguard to support mission-aligned training, education, or community water safety efforts.

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AN OREGON LIFEGUARD PROGRAM

Luke Martinez

Curry County, Oregon is the southwest-most county in Oregon. Bordering California, it is a remote region characterized geographically by its nearly 100 miles of rugged, remote coastline and its many wild and scenic rivers.



Lifeguard Declan Debler patrolling the iconic "Secret Beach."

Photo: Luke Martinez

It has been called the wild rivers coast, the lost Oregon coast, and other nicknames, alluding to its natural beauty and seemingly unlimited number of free-flowing bodies of water. As is the case with much of the Oregon and Northern California coast, communities which once relied on timber and fishing economies have leaned into tourism as their main economic drivers.

Although Curry County is about the size of the State of Delaware, the population is only around 23,000. Nevertheless, it attracts significant national and international tourism.



Two lifeguards enter the water at Harris Beach. Photo: Morgan Perlmutter



Lifeguard Luke Martinez and Declan Debler patrolling by PRWC along the dangerous Rogue River Bar entrance.

Photo: Morgan Perlmutter

There have been an ever-growing number of visitors every year for the past few decades. With its vast acreage of public lands and open water the region has become a hotspot for outdoor recreation — so much so that Curry County's Harris Beach State Park has become the most visited day-use state park in Oregon, with 1.5 to 2 million visitors a year.

The Need for Lifeguards

A string of open water incidents took place from 2011 to 2018 crystalizing the need for lifeguards. In one instance, a group from Utah, tide pooling during the 2011 Japanese earthquake-induced tsunami, were caught off guard and swept into the ocean. All but one were ultimately able to self-rescue. That one was saved by a Good Samaritan — who is now a lifeguard.

In another incident in 2016, a small fishing vessel was caught in building surf along the treacherous Rogue River bar crossing and capsized. Both occupants were once again rescued by Good Samaritan surfers and a now program lifeguard, who witnessed it happen.

In a third instance, in 2018, a large set wave — known in the Northwest as a sneaker wave — during a rapidly building long-period swell event, pulled a father and his young son out to sea on a bluebird day in front of the mother and wife. Unfortunately, neither survived.

Since all these events and others like them seemed preventable, and with visibly increasing visitor attendance — despite no resources aimed at prevention and minimal resources established for aquatic response — the process was started to build an open water lifeguard program for the region.

After two years of applying for grant funding, Curry County's Aquatic Safety Program was established in 2020, with a mission to provide year-round outreach, education, and response to those visiting and recreating along our waterways and shorelines, to reduce injury and drowning in the region.



Junior lifeguards complete the Iron Challenge — a run/swim/paddle endurance race to finish off their last day. Photo: Luke Martinez

From Nothing to Program Development

As the program started, with one individual and very limited resources, a major effort was made toward establishing program standards and providing exemplary public service in a state where very little open water lifeguarding exists. For the program's boating safety operations, a relationship was established with the Oregon State Marine Board, which helped guide training standards and acquire essential watercraft for patrols.

article continued on page 9

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*Lifeguard Luke Martinez practices preventive lifeguarding at South Beach.
Photo: Declan Debler*

On the open water lifeguarding end of the program, we were fortunate to build a relationship with our neighbors to the south, the North Coast sector of the California State Parks Lifeguard Division out of Trinidad, California. After attending a qualifying event and auditing their lifeguard academy in 2021, the Curry County program was able to build a standard, develop essential partnerships, and begin our workforce and program development through the development of our Junior Lifeguard Program.

From 2021 to 2024 our Junior Lifeguard Program operated with one full-time lifeguard, alongside multiple seasonal lifeguard instructors. Work was focused on being a presence at the county's unforgiving coastal environments, especially during the high-surf season — October thru April — and along its waterways during the busy summer months.

An initiative was also commenced to provide water safety education to our youth through community outreach in public schools, not only in Curry County but neighboring rural counties as well. The program included working with after-school programs to provide on-the-water opportunities to youth.

During this time, the program, with just one full-time lifeguard on staff, had a yearly average of around 7,500 contacts, 200 plus preventive actions, 2,500 K-12 students educated, around a dozen rescues, and establishment of the first and currently only junior lifeguard program in Oregon.



*Lifeguard Declan Debler about to hit a long paddle at Battle Rock.
Photo: Luke Martinez*

In 2024 the program was able to onboard another full-time lifeguard, again with the help of our collaborative partners, and continue our operational growth. In the fall of 2025, the program officially became a United States Lifesaving Association certified lifeguard agency.



*Lifeguard Declan Debler (l) and Lifeguard Shannon Ingram (r) with a group of Junior Lifeguard Aids.
Photo: Luke Martinez*

We are currently staffed by two full-time lifeguards and multiple seasonal lifeguard instructors. Our Junior Lifeguard Program hosts three sessions in two different counties, involving 135 junior lifeguards last year. In the coming years we look to build our program further, adding an additional full-time lifeguard and adding homegrown seasonal lifeguards to our operations and Junior Lifeguard Program.

As we have come to realize through our work and the relationships built within the open water lifeguard arena, we are extremely fortunate to be able to provide our public service to those who visit, live, and recreate within our region. We look forward to our continued path as an open water lifeguard agency. It's a great day to be a county lifeguard!

Editor's Note: Like Martinez is an Aquatic Safety Officer, Lifeguard II, for Curry County and initiated the program he has profiled here.

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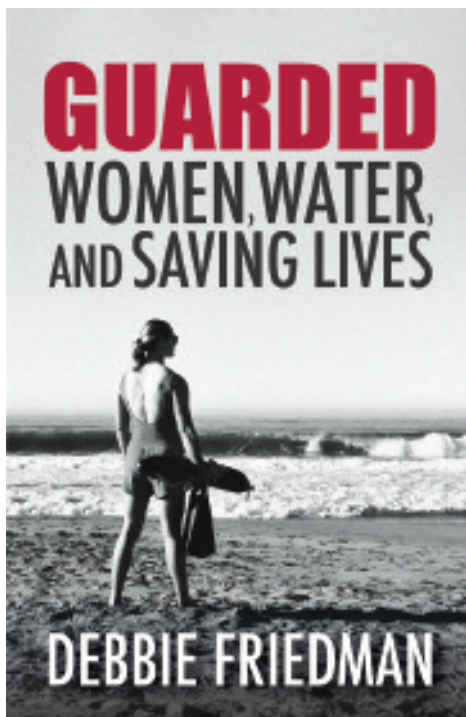
Debbie Friedman

All I had to do was survive the sixth and final day of lifeguard training. It was the spring of 1978 at Huntington State Beach. My towel and swimsuit were still wet from the first day of class. Sand lived in my hair, ears, crotch, and bed. I was exhausted.

I saw big plates of steaming French fries and juicy hamburgers on the horizon where the ocean met the sky. I ran miles in the soft sand daily with the other trainees — part of our rescue training.

My calves seized, every step twitching with the threat of a full-blown cramp. I limped until the instructor told me to run again. I thought I knew pain from swimming miles, but this new level of pain humbled me.

In the training room, my head dipped forward again and again, and I struggled to hold it up long enough to watch the seconds crawl by. At some point today, I reassured myself, lifeguard training will end.



This story is an excerpt from the recently released book. [no photo credit]

For one week, 28 lifeguard wannabes, including me, reported to the training room at 8 a.m. sharp. If we weren't on time, we'd fail training and leave in a walk of shame — head down, disgraced, past the smirks and judgment of everyone: *You are not lifeguard material*. I wasn't going to be that person, and I set my alarm for 6:30 a.m., twice.

Each day, more seats were empty. No one told us why.

The training room was the lifeguard garage for vehicles and equipment. In the early morning, real lifeguards drove the jeeps out, while we, the rookies, set up the transformation. We placed small desks and chairs, meant for school kids, in neat rows. They were uncomfortable and ridiculous as I squeezed my body into the small space.

Next to the garage was the small and simple concrete lifeguard administrative office, a white-stucco building with emerald-green trim, located at the intersection of Beach Boulevard and Pacific Coast Highway, the entrance to Huntington State Beach.

Two weeks prior, after the swim and run parts of the tryouts, I'd lined up to enter this little white building for the interview part of the exam. I was wet, shaking, and bundled in my Saddleback College swim-team sweatsuit, waiting for my turn to tell the supervising lifeguards what I thought I knew.

Half the hundred men who tried out did not score high enough on the swims and runs to qualify for the interview. I had been the only woman — and remained the only woman — still standing.

"Debora Friedman? Follow me."

I entered the building and sat before three men. I cleared my throat and wished I saw a woman at the table.



The author learned years later about Joyce Hoffman (also on the cover of this issue), who had joined the City of Del Mar, California lifeguards in 1971.

Photo: Tom Keck

The men deciding my fate were seated behind a desk with pads of paper and coffee mugs. They wore white-collared, pressed uniform shirts and silver-plated name tags on their front pockets. A patch with a golden bear on all fours had the words: California State Park Lifeguard.

They introduced themselves, but I immediately forgot their names. One of the men had a dark, straggly beard and greasy-looking hair. None of the swimmers I knew had beards. Swimmers wanted to be hydrodynamic.

I avoided making eye contact with the greasy man. He didn't look like he could swim very fast. To steady myself and quiet my inner ramblings, I placed my hands on my quads. I could see their mouths move, but I didn't hear any words.

Debbie, pay attention, pull yourself together.

Refocused, my voice shook as I answered a question about my experience as a swim teacher. I wasn't sure it was going well when I heard myself say, "I don't know how to surf."

Another question came to me: "What will you do if you see an illegal alien?"

article continued on next page

I'd just seen *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*.

Too quickly, I answered, "What's an illegal alien?"



Kim Raymont and Debbie Friedman, the first women at San Clemente State Beach, 1978. Photo: Ed Vodrazka

I told them I needed a summer job, was a strong swimmer, and wanted to help people. The next day, I got a call. "You passed tryouts. Report to training on March 20, 8 a.m., Huntington State Beach."

I hung up the phone, relieved and surprised that I passed. *I can't wait to tell Scott at swim workout tomorrow.*

Every day in training, we started with a "vitamin," a mile run on the beach to the Magnolia HQ lifeguard tower. We entered the water, raced a 1,000-yard swim, tryouts all over again, and ran back to the garage. Every run, swim, drill, written exam, and mock rescue were graded and critiqued.

We didn't smile or laugh — this was all business, and the expectations were to carry ourselves as adults, even though at the age of eighteen, I had not entirely passed that threshold.



Four women made the annual photo of the lifeguards of Pendleton Coast (Doheny, San Clemente, and San Onofre) in 1979. Photo: Pendleton Coast

Every morning, my pulse raced and my hands shook as I fumbled with the rubber band to keep my hair in a tight ponytail.

I was surprised to be the only woman in the class. I didn't understand why lifeguards were exclusively male. I knew little about the job, but I saw no women teaching, driving the jeeps, or working in the lifeguard towers. I sat in a classroom of all men, my competition.

In between lectures, I looked around the room at the crowd of men surrounding me. I had no experience processing what it meant to be the only woman in a class of 28. I searched my mind, trying to figure out how I was supposed to feel.

Was anyone staring at me? How should I act? Do I pretend it's no big deal? Where are the other women?



Erin Porter, Kim Raymont, Sandy Groos, and Debbie Friedman. The women of the Pendleton Coast District in 1979. Photo: Pendleton Coast District

My competitive nature put these feelings aside most of the day, and once I was in the water, I wanted to pass the swimmer in front of me. I beat most of the men in my training class during the swims. Years of swimming miles with the Mission Viejo Nadadores gave me a strength advantage.

Even in the cold, choppy March water, when the ocean couldn't decide if it was winter or spring, my stroke and body position felt more natural in the salty, buoyant ocean than in the pool.

Something clicked, and I realized all those pool laps had made me strong in the ocean. I was built for this.

We swam without wetsuits or fins, and, with a bit more body fat than most of the men, my body rode high in the water, which hovers around 60 degrees at that time of year. My head naturally followed my arms up and around to grab a breath, giving me a solid spatial sense of where I was in the water.

I was aggressive. The previous summer, I'd swum a couple of pier races and found out it was kosher to grab the swimmer in front of me, pulling them back while I propelled myself forward. I swam my daily "vitamin" by grabbing, pulling, and pushing my competition behind me to secure as much of a lead as I could in the swims before I started running.

I'd never been a runner, and I paid the price. My bare feet were pink, even delicate, and had no calluses to protect me from surfaces harder than water. During the morning vitamins, I managed to gut out the run and stayed with the back of the pack. After entering the water, I caught up and swam with the leaders. Running was always the hardest part.

My skin was raw and chafed where my nylon swimsuit ground against my thighs, glutes, and hips. I tried to see if the men in my class had the same problems, but I couldn't look too long to compare rub marks without my intentions becoming suspect. I didn't have a confidante to help me with red, inflamed welts on my inner thighs.



The Huntington State Beach crew in 1982. [no credit]

It appeared the other men were not talking to each other about their sore and tender body parts. Women

shared this kind of information. Maybe men didn't. I wanted to throw away my swimsuit, burn it, and take a bath in Neosporin.

But I was resilient. "Sit up straight, stay awake, SWIM FAST," was my training mantra.

As part of our cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) training, we were paired up on the beach and instructed, "One of you will swim out past the surf zone and become the victim. Your partner will swim out with his rescue buoy and bring you, the victim, to shore while performing mouth-to-mouth resuscitation."

CPR wasn't a laughing matter. We worked on mannequins to practice the lifesaving technique that pumps a person's heart and gives oxygen to their brain when they might otherwise be dead.

"Check your hand position on the sternum, 15 compressions, and then two breaths," an instructor said. He walked through our practice area, grading us on our technique.

My arms were tired from repeating the straight-armed compressions, pumping one hand on top of the other, squeezing the heart between the sternum and the spine. After a round of 15 compressions, the second rescuer breathed deeply twice, directly into "Annie," the mannequin's mouth, and we repeated the cycle until we were told to stop. I rotated to my new position and breathed twice into Annie as we practiced and took turns swapping each other's saliva.



*Debbie Friedman, John Topar, and Bill Kramer, Huntington State Beach, full-time peace officer lifeguards, 1983.
Photo: Bill Kramer*

Back on the beach, it was time to practice mouth-to-mouth resuscitation on a victim in the water. The rookies mobbed me, all wanting to be my partner. No one wanted to lip-lock with another guy.

The instructors laughed; they thought it was funny. And I laughed because I was embarrassed. Underneath the show, I was furious, with no one to tell.

I went out with the first round of victims and my designated partner, Tom, who swam out to rescue me. He wrapped me in his rescue tube, floating me face up. We both believed the instructors could see us all the way from shore, and in that nanosecond, Tom opened his mouth as wide as he could. I tried to make mine small enough for him to get a seal.

Warm air filled my mouth as he blew into me, over and over. It was awful; a mix of warm spit and saltwater shoved into my mouth. We were both scared as he pulled me in, trying to keep up the make-believe rescue breathing. I saw the shore, my salvation, while coughing up the forced air and salt water.

Suddenly, an inside wave slammed us both into the sandy bottom. Tom's teeth crashed into my mouth, and I reached shore with a bloody lip. Everyone was watching us. There were a few laughs about my lip as blood mixed with the water and ran down my chin. No one offered me a tissue or anything else to stop the bleeding.

What did they think — this was a date?

The drill was finally over, and it became clear to me that everything I did was being watched and judged because I'd become the class female.

Just leave me alone so I can kick your ass in the water.

Every day, I ran to the garage as ordered. It reeked of stale air, body odor, and damp clothes. All of us had been sharing one toilet outside, and the

foul smell somehow joined the offensive olfactory cocktail inside and made it worse.

It was also a time of relief. I could dry off, warm up, and rest my legs. With shaky hands, I took notes and listened to lectures on first aid, lifeguard procedures, rules, and regulations.

I looked for moments to make contact with my classmates, time for a brief chat, or some acknowledgment of the shared pain we endured. But no one looked up; the other rookies stared straight ahead with blank, glazed faces.



Kim Raymont, Sandy Groos, and Debbie Friedman at San Clemente State Beach on an August day in 1985 that the beach was staffed entirely by women, supervised by Debbie Friedman.

Photo: Michael Brouard

I did make friends. State Parks gave us money and a travel allowance to stay in a local Newport Dunes motel. Before the first day of training, Kim Raymont, my good friend from Nadadores, told me about two of her San Diego State swim friends who would be in the same class.

"I checked with George and Brian," she told me, "and they are okay if you stay with them."

If I shared their room, I could pocket the leftover travel money.

"Sounds good to me," I replied.

After another nonstop day, my body dragging, the short instructor with the high-pitched voice gave us his usual send-off: "Clean up your gear, put the chairs away, and be here at 8 a.m. tomorrow."

article continued on page 15

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On the 75th anniversary of the provision of lifeguards at California State Parks, the lifeguards gathered, exchanged stories, issued awards, and reflected. A women's panel included Debbie Friedman, Calla Allison, Sandy Horn, and MaryAnn Lughermo who gave remembrances of their experience. Photo: California State Parks

George, Brian, and I piled into my Dodge Colt and headed to the motel. We bought burritos and ate them before we made it to our room.

"Who's your favorite teacher?" I asked.

"They are all losers, but Carl isn't a jerk," George grinned.

We joked about the fastest swimmer, how to survive the runs, and then I heard snoring. Brian was on the floor, a wet towel under his head and a polyester bedspread over his body. He was fast asleep.

The days blurred until it was the final day of training. The clock dragged as 6 p.m. approached. The instructors stood before us and made final remarks: "... lives are at stake."

At last we were dismissed. No handshakes, no congratulations. The only way I knew I passed was that I hadn't failed. It was anticlimactic. One of the biggest things I'd ever accomplished in my life, and I was left alone to pack up my gear.

I needed Big Macs and sleep. I needed to read my water-stained notes and

make sense of all the information thrown at me. Over and over again, I was told that if I didn't remember this or that, someone was going to die on my watch. Those words went straight to my heart.

I bargained with myself: If I could eat and sleep, I would memorize all my notes, do all the right things. Outside the training room, I staggered to my car.

Carl Drake, one of the instructors, walked up to me, "I need you to report for duty at San Clemente State Beach tomorrow. Starting time is 9 a.m. Go to Tower 1."

I started to shake. But not from fatigue or hunger. I was working as a lifeguard tomorrow. I looked at my teacher and nodded, "Carl, where is Tower 1?"

Editor's Note: Debbie Friedman was a California State Parks lifeguard, both seasonal and permanent, at San Clemente and Huntington State Beaches from 1978–1990. This excerpt of Chapter 5, "Rookie," from her book, *GUARDED: Women, Water, and Saving Lives*, offers an inside look at the first generation of California's women ocean lifeguards from the 1970s and '80s — a story that is intensely physical, exhilarating, and deeply human. The book is available at: www.toweronepress.com, Amazon, or by order from any bookstore.

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MEDALS OF VALOR AWARDED BY USLA

Since 1987, the USLA has issued awards to lifeguards and others who perform heroic acts. The highest honor, for working lifeguards, is the Medal of Valor, which is awarded to a lifeguard who voluntarily risked their life, to an extraordinary degree, in saving, or attempting to save another person, or who sacrificed themselves for the benefit of others.

At its fall 2025 meeting, the USLA Board of Directors awarded the Medal of Valor to Hugh Shields of Barnegat Light Beach Patrol, Marea Zlatunich of California State Parks, and four lifeguards from the (city of) San Diego Lifeguard Service — Marc Brown, Cortez Ritumalta, Greg Nelsen, Erik Klyemann.

Here were the events that led to these awards.

Hugh Shields

On August 18th, 2024, at around 6:30 p.m., the Barnegat Light Volunteer Fire Company Water Rescue Team was dispatched to the south jetty of the Barnegat Light Inlet. Two fishermen had become entrapped by heavy seas and a full moon flood tide. Firefighter/Lifeguards Bob Selfridge and Hugh Shields responded using a personal rescue watercraft.

Upon arrival, Shields swam to the jetty, and climbed the slippery, wave-covered rocks to make contact with the fishermen. Selfridge, on the PRWC, ferried



Coming to the rescue of two fishermen trapped at the end of the jetty. Photo: Barnegat Light Volunteer Fire Company



One of two victims being hoisted from the tower at the end of Barnegat Light Inlet by the US Coast Guard. Photo: Barnegat Light Volunteer Fire Company

lif jackets to Shields and then Shields assisted the victims into the PFDs.

Initially, they planned to have Shields swim the victims to the PRWC, but the large surf and dangerous conditions precluded that option. The US Coast Guard responded with a helicopter.



Hugh Shields Photo: Barnegat Light Volunteer Fire Company

Shields helped the victims climb to the very top of the tower to facilitate the airborne rescue. Upon arrival of the helicopter, Shields collaborated with the USCG rescue swimmer with packaging and pickoffs, as they were hoisted clear of the jetty and tower. He then swam back to the PRWC for a return to shore.

Marea Zlatunich

On August 17, 2025, California State Parks was notified of a missing, suicidal teenager. A search was commenced near Yellow Bank Beach — an isolated beach within Coast Dairies State Park in Santa Cruz County, California. The beach is accessible only by a steep trail, surrounded by 60-80-foot cliffs. Winds were 20 knots and the surf was 4-5 feet.

The missing teenager was spotted approximately 450 yards offshore and ½ mile south of Yellow Bank Beach, floating face down.



The scene off Yellow Bank Beach. Photo: California State Parks

Lifeguard Zlatunich made access to the beach running approximately one-half mile, carrying equipment. She entered the water and, following the hand signals of units on the cliff, located the victim, who had drifted another ½ mile south, still 450 yards from shore.



Marea Zlatunich Photo: California State Parks

Upon arrival, she found the victim unresponsive and requiring immediate extrication. She swam the victim to the nearest beach — an isolated pocket beach with no trail access. Once ashore, she immediately initiated CPR. She continued CPR, alone, for 20 minutes, on a remote beach where backup was certain to be greatly delayed and not knowing when it might come, until two other lifeguards were able to access her and the patient.

The three lifeguards preformed CPR for another 15 minutes before a paramedic, who had arrived on scene, declared the victim deceased. The guards then swam the body to a harbor patrol boat, which brought them back to Santa Cruz harbor.

Marc Brown, Cortez Ritumalta, Greg Nelsen, and Erik Klyemann

On March 28, 2025, at about 6:30 p.m., a lifeguard on watch at the San Diego Lifeguard Service's lifeguard tower at South Mission Beach called the SDLG dispatcher to request a cross-check on the disposition of two people walking near the tip of the North Channel Jetty — which is part of the harbor entrance to Mission Bay. The surf was 10+ feet and slamming into the jetty.

A hard-hull surf rescue boat was responded, with an operator and crewmember aboard. Upon arrival, there was immediate recognition of an emergency as only one of the two people was in sight and that person was pointing to a crevice in the rocks. That person then, too, disappeared. Low light conditions made it difficult to tell where the person went.

The surf rescue boat dropped off veteran lifeguard Marc Brown in the water, and he crawled onto the jetty to investigate. A personal rescue watercraft was also dispatched, and Cortez Ritumalta was dropped off in the water. Greg Nelsen and Erik Klyemann arrived from shore and were



Erik Klyemann, Cortez Ritumalta, Greg Nelsen, and Marc Brown at the North Channel Jetty. Photo: San Diego Lifeguard Service

then transported by a third rescue boat to the tip of the jetty. All four rescuers were now on the jetty.

They learned that the individual who was first lost visually had been blown into a crevice in the jetty by the surf. Every wave that hit the jetty filled up the crevice with water. The victim was unconscious and needed quick extrication to have a chance at survival. The surf was unrelenting. Darkness was falling.

According to Costner McIntosh, who submitted the Medal of Valor nomination, “The peril on the jetty that late evening, into the night, was the most serious I have witnessed or heard of. The surf size, period, and focus on the tip of the jetty that entire day was unlike anything I had witnessed. At one point all rescuers involved were swept off their feet and piled on top of each other. Three of the four sustained injuries but continued to perform at the highest level to ensure the patients extrication.”

A San Diego Fire Rescue helicopter was sent to the scene, and a rescue medic was lowered to the jetty. When the biggest wave of the night came through, it swept the rescuers off their feet and the helicopter crew reported that all rescuers had been wiped out. They called for more resources including the US Coast

Guard. Communication from the team on the jetty to the other rescuers on this call was extremely challenging.

According to McIntosh, “The rescuers had no tools other than their bodies and a buoy, with minimal personal protective equipment. The team of four lifeguards, with help from the helicopter rescue paramedic, were eventually able to extricate the entrapped victim during a lull. The victim was then hoisted with the paramedic to the helicopter and flown to a hospital, where she recovered. The other victim was ambulatory and able to walk off the jetty with the assistance of lifeguards.”

During the rescue, Marc Brown broke his ankle which eventually led to an early retirement. Ritumalta and Klyemann sustained head and facial injuries. The helmet of the rescue paramedic was cracked and the paramedic also sustained injuries.

As McIntosh concluded, “All put their bodies and lives on the line to get the two patients off the jetty. The teamwork and courage they showed, with no light and little ability to communicate to other resources, was commendable to the highest level.”

Editor's Note: *The descriptions of the events here come directly from the nominations submitted to the USLA. We thank nominators for bringing these events to our attention.*



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WE ARE PUBLIC SAFETY

B. Chris Brewster

If you've read the article in this edition detailing the actions behind the medals of valor that were issued by the USLA last fall, you'll see just a few examples of the extraordinary efforts made by America's open water lifeguards to rescue others, despite great peril to themselves.

I served for 22 years as a San Diego ocean lifeguard, mostly as a full-time, year-round employee. Of those, 13 were spent as Lifeguard Chief — a period where I observed innumerable acts of heroism by lifeguards.



Photo: California State Parks, Ryan Gates

In my earlier years, I entered the water to come to the aid of others in surf up to 20 feet, sometimes late at night, occasionally rappelling on lines off 300-foot cliffs to rescue others, and worked under helicopters to pluck others to safety. Most of the time I was not alone — I was a member of a team who did all of this and much more.

So, the USLA's initiative to see beach lifeguards recognized as public safety professionals makes total sense to me. While that recognition seems to be the norm in much of California, it's far from universal nationally and we need to bring about change.

Not so long ago, I was unsurprised, but immensely proud to see lifesavers in Australia being the first to respond to those shot by gunmen at Bondi Beach in December 2025. Of course they



would. It is our role to protect the people we serve; and every situation is a bit different.

I've travelled to Australia innumerable times in my former role as a vice-president of the International Life Saving Federation. I count as friends many members of Surf Life Saving Australia.

I well know, having visited Bondi and many other Aussie beaches, how much the Australians love their beach culture and how much they love their lifesavers, both paid and volunteers. They are truly guardians of the beach culture that is so ingrained in Australian life.

In the wake of the Bondi tragedy, I read one press report after another about how the lifesavers responded. One was filmed running from a nearby beach, barefoot, down the road, with an AED; just as beachgoers streamed away from Bondi in terror. Another was interviewed, with great emotion, over his first response to a death. And then there was the story about the lifesaver who rounded up kids from a playground to move them out of danger.

The New York Times reported that the lifesavers at Bondi emerged as soon as the shooting ended with critical medical aid supplies, stretchers, and rescue boards to use as stretchers, when no stretchers were left. More importantly, they responded immediately with medical expertise in a mass-casualty incident, with an urgent need for maximum response. They were, quite simply, an essential part of the public safety net; and indeed, the first on scene.

That the Bondi lifesavers responded as a team of public safety professionals, before anyone else was available, is immensely inspiring, but not at all out of character. It's our job. It's what we train for.



Photo: B. Chris Brewster

And I am no less surprised that US lifesavers respond on a regular basis to conditions that place them at great risk. Were an incident similar to the Australian tragedy to happen in the USA, I have no doubt that our lifesavers would act just as heroically.

When I was a young lifeguard in San Diego, it was a somewhat sleepy beach town, where the leading story on the news was often a traffic accident or similar. Some days, after participating in a perilous cliff rescue at Black's Beach or seeing a fellow lifeguard run down a cliff and jump 40 feet into the ocean off the Clam in February to rescue two people in large surf, I gnashed my teeth over the lack of media attention to these challenging efforts to rescue others.



Photo: B. Chris Brewster

That changed over the years, and the media came to realize that covering lifeguard rescues was not only appropriate but greatly appreciated by the public. It drew viewers. But many of our actions are unseen and unheralded.

Over 80,000 rescues from drowning were reported by USLA affiliated lifeguard agencies in the most recent reporting year. Although just a handful of these cases received media attention and public recognition, in many cases a life that would otherwise have been lost, was saved.

This is no different from our colleagues in firefighting and police work. Most of our actions, however dramatic, are a routine part of our jobs.



Photo: California State Parks, Ryan Gates



Photo: San Diego Lifeguard Service

The beach environment, with everyone, including lifeguards, in limited clothing, barefoot, enjoying the sun, limits public understanding of the critical public safety role of lifeguards. All of this probably explains the challenges to attracting Congressional attention to recognition of beach lifeguards as public safety professionals. We need to tell our story to the public we serve better.



Photo: B. Chris Brewster

Lifeguard statistics are critical to documenting our work. I used to tell the lifeguards reporting to me, "If you don't document it, it didn't happen." Of course, that wasn't literally true. It did happen, but if it wasn't documented our agency would have no record of it and our efforts to justify more lifeguards, improved equipment, and better lifeguard stations would be hamstrung.

Similarly, though, if we don't effectively tell our story to the public, their image of our work may be as people with a simple, fun, unchallenging job to be envied, but not necessarily highly respected. The USLA has made prodigious efforts to elicit statistics from

America's beach lifeguard agencies, and we publish them to promote the importance of our work. Our Heroic Acts program helps highlight the bravery that is an essential part of our job.

We need to do more though, as a profession. At the local level, we need to tell our story in as many ways as possible, through the traditional media, social media, local community meetings, and in every way possible. Many fire and police departments are masters at this. We can be too, but it takes work on the part of lifesaving leadership and USLA chapters at the local level.

Like our public safety peers, we must ensure that our stories are told. They are compelling stories. And public awareness will assist not only in the effort to have beach lifeguards recognized nationally as public safety professionals, but also in the effort to ensure that each of us has the training and equipment needed to protect those we serve.



Photo: California State Parks, Ryan Gates

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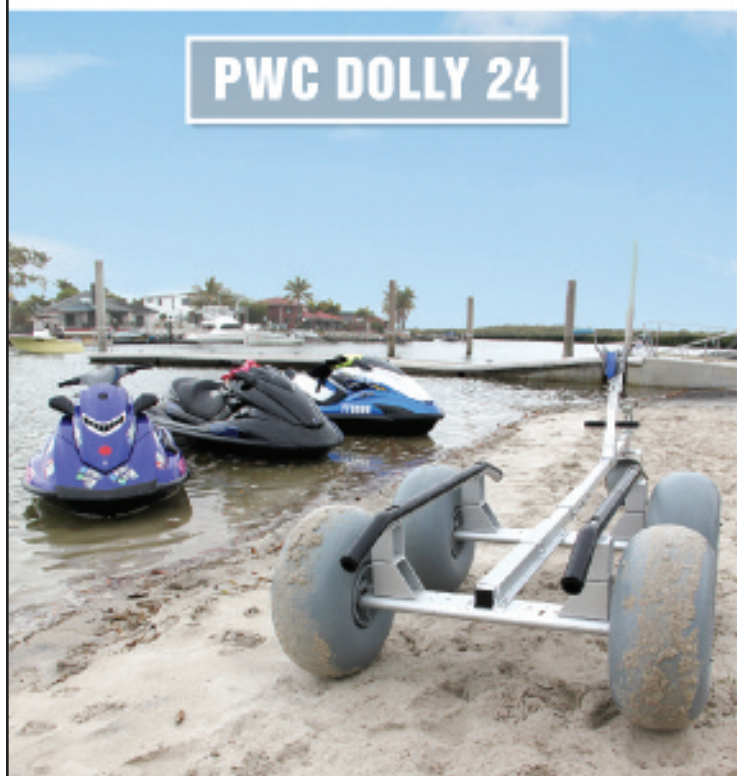


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SOUTH HAVEN REINSTATES LIFEGUARDS

B. Chris Brewster

After 25 years of absence, the beaches of the city of South Haven, Michigan will once again be protected by professional lifeguards, thanks to action by the South Haven City Council and the support of many advocates, including the USLA.

South Haven has hired David Figueredo as Chief Lifeguard and Beach Safety Manager. In introducing himself to the city council, Figueredo noted that he served for seven years at the beaches of Evanston, Illinois — on the opposite shore of Lake Michigan — as a lifeguard, beach manager, and lake-front supervisor.



David Figueredo is the new Chief Lifeguard and Beach Safety Manager of South Haven. Photo: South Haven

Starting With One Beach

He'll oversee a lifeguard staff protecting South Haven's most highly attended beach — South Beach — with plans to expand lifeguard protection to its other main beach — North Beach. They are separated by jetties and a channel used by boaters.

"I deeply respect the passion this community has for water safety," said Figueredo, "That commitment was a major factor in what drew me to this role, and I am incredibly grateful for the opportunity to serve in this capacity. I look forward to building this



A wide boat channel with jetties on either side separates South Haven's two main beaches. To the left is the northern portion of South Beach, where lifeguards will first be staffed. Photo: B. Chris Brewster

program to the highest possible standards and contributing to a safe and successful season."

Police Chief Adam DeBoer, to whom Figueredo will report, was a distance swimmer who completed the California State Parks lifeguard academy several years ago. He commented, "We are really moving forward," and noted that Figueredo had already participated in a meeting of the USLA Great Lakes Region.

A Return After 25 Years

In 2001, South Haven terminated their lifeguard operation, in favor of a swim-at-your-own-risk approach. During that period, 12 fatal drownings, along with many other non-fatal drownings, took place, and there have been a number of related lawsuits filed, some of which have yet to be resolved. The rationale for the hiatus involved a number of factors, including budget, legal, and philosophical issues.

Lisa McDonald, whose daughter and her boyfriend died together in fatal drownings at South Haven said, "Sadly, this won't bring Emily and Kory back. Nothing can. But knowing that future Emilys and Korys going to these beaches will be safe is something positive that has come from something so negative — their drownings."

MacDonald was blunt in her opinion that, "Lifeguards should never have (been) seen as a luxury or liability,

but rather as a priority and responsibility," but also that, "I'm grateful the city of South Haven has finally realized the latter."

Funding With Parking Fees

As one method of helping fund the lifeguard program, South Haven has modified its beach parking rates, moving from a daily fee to an hourly fee. That was one of dozens of recommendations made by a four-person team from the USLA. That team volunteered their time, travelling to South Haven at the invitation of the city, meeting with stakeholders, and assembling an extensive report recommending the reinstatement of lifeguards.

The USLA has a rich history of advocating for the staffing of beach lifeguards and the promotion of minimum standards in open water lifesaving, which have become the norm, nationwide. If you sometimes wonder what your membership supports, this is but one example. Thank you.



The author presenting the USLA's report and recommendations to the South Haven City Council. Photo: Andy Braudy

IMPALED OBJECTS: FROM OPENING TO CLOSING

Matthew T. Giachetti

You are on duty at the best surf break on your beach. It's a beautiful day, with a slight wind from the south, four-to-six-foot waves, and the water is glassy. The beach is crowded. You're enjoying watching the full lineup, thinking of being out there yourself after your shift is over.

You notice two surfers take off on the same wave. One successfully catches the wave and the other bails. The unlucky surfer gets closed out on, and when he breaks through the surface, you hear him scream. His board is broken in half and he is struggling to stay afloat.

You leap into action, swimming to the victim, securing him, and swimming him to shore. As you start walking him from the water, you notice massive hemorrhaging of bright red blood coming from his right thigh near his groin. The skeg must have got him. Once you get him to dry sand, the clock starts ticking. What do you do?

Airway Trumps Trauma

The primary assessment order of airway (A), breathing (B), circulation (C), tells us that protecting the airway is the number one concern for any patient suffering a medical or traumatic emergency. One exception is when there is massive hemorrhaging.

The ABC's as we know them, are the priority order of concern for almost every emergency, except when there is

an injury to the body where massive bleeding, whether it be venous or arterial, internal or external, needs to be controlled to save this person's life. In this case, under current national protocol, addressing bleeding is the priority.

Massive Bleeding Trumps Airway

A person can die from massive bleeding in as little as one to two minutes, versus brain death from lack of oxygen that does not start for at least four to six minutes. The XABCDE assessment becomes the primary assessment to save a person's life when massive bleeding is present.

X = Exsanguinating Hemorrhage
(severe bleeding)

A = Airway

B = Breathing

C = Circulation

D = Disability (Neurological
Assessment - AVPU/GCS)

E = Exposure (find other injuries /
prevent hypothermia)

Time Is of the Essence

The goal is to get the injured person off of the X within the platinum 10 minutes and into surgical interventions within the golden hour. The platinum 10 minutes is where lifesaving assessments and interventions begin, and the stabilization of the patient for transport to the proper medical facility occurs.

Initiate your emergency action plan immediately, ensuring that EMS personnel are summoned, and find the source(s) of the bleed. A rapid assessment or blood sweep/rake will have you check the body in the following order: neck, arms, legs, torso — front and back. Always remember that in addition to any obvious bleed, there may be others. Check the full body.

Once you find arterial bleeding, bright red in nature and spurting from the neck, arms, or leg, you stop and treat. Bleeding in the neck can be treated with packing and wrapping (see figure 1 and 2), while bleeding in the arms or legs can be treated with direct pressure, pressure bandage, wound packing and/or tourniquet, depending on what is available, with the ultimate goal of the application of a tourniquet to stop the bleeding.

Bleeding or holes that are found on the torso can be treated by sealing the wounds, using a manufactured chest seal or any materials that are occlusive, such as a ziplock bag.

Once bleeding is controlled, the three core tenets of patient care need to be met:

- Maintain core body temperature
- Maintain a patent airway
- Oxygenate if they need it, and you have it

If You're Hot, They're Not

Due to the blood loss, resulting in poor perfusion and hypovolemic shock, you need to keep the patient warm, even if the air temperature is hot, the victim is not. If the patient is breathing and talking in full sentences, they are maintaining their own airway, but if the ability to do so becomes too difficult,



Figure 1



Figure 2

article continued on next page

you need to maintain their airway for them, including airway adjuncts and supplemental oxygen if needed.

The beach or aquatic environment presents multiple problems for preparing the patient for transport to a medical facility. Lifeguards work great as a team, and this situation is a team job. If the object that caused the bleeding is no longer present in the patient's body, then, once the bleeding is controlled, extrication from the treatment area can begin.

If the object that caused the injury is still impaled in the body, then the object must be secured prior to moving the victim. Depending on the size of the object, this can be done with many items that are found in a typical lifeguard medical aid kit, or other items at the lifeguard stand/tower, such as cravats, trauma bandages, towels, or even headblocks from the spinal board (see figures 3 - 7).

If the impaled object is too large to secure and/or to allow for victim transport, it may need to be cut by specialty trained personnel with proper equipment, such as a Sawzall.

While patient care is being provided, others on the lifeguard team will help

facilitate transport to advanced care. This may involve how to get the patient from the beach to an ambulance or securing a landing zone for a helicopter. Most of these decisions should already be preplanned, but extenuating circumstances may call for changes to those plans.

There are many goals to be met from the time the massive hemorrhaging begins to the time the patient has reached the hospital trauma team, with each level of care increasing as more personnel are introduced to the event. Basic life support (BLS) will be the first level of care provided by the lifeguard team. The primary goal of BLS is to keep the patient in the compensated shock state, which includes an increased heart and respiratory rate.

This is accomplished through proper bleeding control interventions, airway management, and maintaining core body temperature, which collectively gives the patient up to a 90% chance of survival. When bleeding control and airway management interventions are delayed and the patient is in the decompensated shock state — which includes a decreased heart and respiratory rate — the chance of survival drops to 10% or less.

If advanced life support (ALS) becomes available, whether from the aquatic agency itself, or an outside source, interventions such as intravenous (IV) or intraosseous (IO) fluid resuscitation, and advanced airway management, such as an endotracheal tube or super glottic airway, can now be introduced to the patient.

A paramedic can help with pain management through the administration of morphine, fentanyl, or ketamine. Human blood (whole blood) or tranexamic acid (TXA) can also be administered by ALS, depending on agency, municipal or state protocols.

Upon arrival at the hospital, a smooth transition from the transport team to the trauma team is critical, including vital information about the incident from the beginning. The goal is to have the patient at the hospital within the golden hour, increasing the chance of survival.

As lifeguards, we may not see massive bleeding emergencies or objects impaled in the body every day, but they happen more than you think. Consider that the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission reports that beach umbrella-related incidents send approximately 3,000 people to the hospital each year.



Figure 3



Figure 4



Figure 5



Figure 6

In the summer of 2025, an Asbury Park, New Jersey lifeguard made international news when impaled by an umbrella after a large wind gust. High profile incidents include Bethany Hamilton losing her left arm due to a shark attack, the death of Mikala Jones, severing his femoral artery with the fin of his own surfboard, and the loss of our brother lifeguard, Tamayo Perry, who was tragically attacked by a shark.

Being prepared for such emergencies, having plans in place and equipment on hand, gives the injured person the best chance of survival.

Editor's note: Mathew T. Giachetti is an associate member of the USLA Medical Committee, the Safety and Certification Officer for Spring Lake Ocean Rescue — a USLA certified agency in New Jersey — and President of LifeForce USA, Inc. He can be reached at: mat@lifeorceusa.com.



Figure 7

Lifelines

USLA National Lifeguard Championships 2026:

The USLA Board of Directors has approved Fort Lauderdale as host of the USLA National Lifeguard Championships. The Junior Lifeguard and U19 competitions take place on August 4th. The lifeguard events take place August 5-7. Check www.uslanationals.org for all the details.

USLA National Lifesaving Conference & Expo:

The USLA has elected to focus our educational offerings at our fall meeting in Jacksonville, Florida, from November 9-12. There will be two days of educational sessions, along with our usual committee meetings and Board of Directors meetings. An exciting, extensive list of educational sessions is being planned, along with an exhibitor hall. The USLA will also be issuing a variety of national awards for heroism and other contributions to lifesaving. The venue is the Hyatt Regency. Please check www.usla.org/events for updates on all the particulars. Be sure to join us for this inaugural event.

2026 Lifesaving World Championships:

The 2026 Lifesaving World Championships, will be held in Port Elizabeth, South Africa on Nelson Mandela Bay. Lifesavers from around the world will compete from November 25 to December 13. Lifesaving South Africa is the host federation. Details on the event can be found at: www.lifesaving2026.com. And by all means, if you haven't visited South Africa, this will be a great opportunity not only to compete, but to tour an incredible country famed for its beauty, its beaches, and its game reserves.



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USLA NATIONAL LIFEGUARD CHAMPIONSHIPS

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TUESDAY
AUGUST 4TH



USLA NATIONAL JUNIOR LIFEGUARD CHAMPIONSHIPS

Junior Lifeguards ages 9 to 17 from across the U.S. battle for individual and relay championship titles. Events include swim, paddle board, rescue, Ironguard, and run-swim-run races in the ocean and a distance run and beach flags on the sand.


WEDNESDAY
AUGUST 5TH



USLA NATIONAL U19 LIFEGUARD CHAMPIONSHIPS

Junior Lifeguards 15-17 are eligible to compete for Championships and earn spots on the USLA Youth National Team that will represent USA in the Lifesaving World Championships (LWC) in Port Elizabeth, South Africa. Junior Lifeguards who turn a minimum of 15 in 2025 and Lifeguards NOT turning 19 in 2026 are eligible.

USLA NATIONAL LIFEGUARD CHAMPIONSHIPS DAY 1

Open and Age Group championships prelims and finals.


THURSDAY
AUGUST 6TH



USLA NATIONAL LIFEGUARD CHAMPIONSHIPS DAY 2

Open and Age Group championships prelims and finals.

BEACH FLAG FINALS UNDER THE LIGHTS


FRIDAY
AUGUST 7TH



USLA NATIONAL LIFEGUARD CHAMPIONSHIPS DAY 3

Open and Age Group championships prelims and finals.
Team & Special Awards Presented on the beach.
Post Championships Competitor Party
@The World Famous Parrot Lounge.

AUGUST
4-7, 2026

FORT LAUDERDALE BEACH,
FLORIDA

-  USLA NATIONAL LIFEGUARD CHAMPIONSHIPS
-  JUNIOR GUARD COMPETITION
-  OPEN & AGE GROUP EVENTS
-  OCEAN & BEACH COMPETITION
-  TEAM EVENTS & AWARDS



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USLA CERTIFIED AGENCIES

The USLA recognizes the following nationally certified lifesaving agencies and thanks them for their participation.

NOTE: “Advanced” designates a lifeguard agency certified at the advance level; “ARRT” designates an aquatic rescue response team; “PRWC” designates personal rescue watercraft certification; “BEVO” designates beach emergency vehicle operations certification (formerly LEVO). All other listings are certified lifeguard agencies.

ALABAMA

Gulf Shores Beach Rescue (Advanced)
Gulf Shores Beach Rescue (BEVO)
Gulf Shores Beach Rescue (PRWC)
Orange Beach Surf Rescue

CALIFORNIA

California State Parks
Camp Pendleton Lifeguards (Advanced)
Camp Surf YMCA San Diego
Capitola (City of)
Carpinteria (City of)
Carpinteria–Summerland Fire Prot. Dist. (ARRT)
Central Fire Prot. Dist., Santa Cruz Cnty. (ARRT)
Coronado Beach Lifeguards (Advanced)
Del Mar Lifeguard Dept. (Advanced)
Encinitas Marine Safety (Advanced)
Golden Gate National Recreation Area
Huntington Beach Marine Safety Div. (Advanced)
Imperial Beach Lifeguard Service (Advanced)
Laguna Beach Marine Safety (Advanced)
Laguna Beach Marine Safety (PRWC)
Lake Mission Viejo Lifeguards (Advanced)
Long Beach Marine Safety Div. (Advanced)
Los Angeles Recreation & Parks (City of)
Los Angeles County Lifeguard Div. (Advanced)
Morro Bay Harbor Dist.
Newport Beach Lifeguard Ops. (Advanced)
OC Lifeguards (Advanced)
OC Lifeguards (BEVO)
Oceanside Lifeguard Div. (Advanced)
Pismo Beach Lifeguard Dept.
Pismo Beach Lifeguard Dept. (PRWC)
Port Hueneme
Port San Luis Harbor Dist. (Avila Beach)

San Clemente Marine Safety Div. (Advanced)
San Diego Lifeguard Service (Advanced)
Santa Barbara (City of) – Aquatic Section
Santa Barbara County Fire Dept. (ARRT)
Santa Barbara Harbor Patrol (ARRT)
Santa Barbara County Lifeguards
Santa Cruz Fire Marine Safety
Santa Monica Harbor Patrol (Advanced)
Seal Beach Marine Safety Dept. (Advanced)
Solana Beach Marine Safety (Advanced)
Sonoma County Regional Parks
Ventura (City) Fire Dept. (ARRT)
Ventura County Fire Dept. (ARRT)
Ventura County Harbor Dept.
Ventura Port Dist. Harbor Patrol
Ventura Port Dist. Harbor Patrol (ARRT)

CONNECTICUT

Connecticut State Parks

DELAWARE

Bethany Beach Patrol (Advanced)
Delaware State Beach Patrol (Advanced)
Dewey Beach Patrol (Advanced)
Fenwick Island Beach Patrol (Advanced)
North Shore Beach Patrol
Rehoboth Beach Patrol
Sea Colony Beach Patrol (Advanced)

FLORIDA

Atlantic Beach Ocean Rescue (Advanced)
Bay County Lifeguard Program
Bay County Fire Rescue (ARRT)
Boca Raton Ocean Rescue
Boynton Beach Ocean Rescue (City of)

Brevard County Fire Ocean Rescue (Advanced)
Canaveral Fire Ocean Rescue (Advanced)
Clearwater Beach Patrol
Cocoa Beach Fire Dept. (Advanced)
Cocoa Beach Fire Dept. (ARRT)
Dania Beach Ocean Rescue (Advanced)
Deerfield Beach Ocean Rescue
Delray Beach Ocean Rescue Div. (Advanced)
Delray Beach Ocean Rescue Div. (PRWC)
Destin Fire Control Dist.
Destin Fire Control Dist. (PRWC)
Escambia County Water Safety Div. (Advanced)
Fernandina Beach Lifeguard Program
Flagler Beach Ocean Rescue (City of)
Fort Lauderdale Ocean Rescue
Fort Lauderdale Ocean Rescue (PRWC)
Hallandale Beach Safety
Hollywood Fire Rescue Beach Safety Div.
Indian River County Ocean Rescue (Advanced)
Jacksonville Beach Ocean Rescue (Advanced)
Jacksonville Beach Ocean Rescue (PRWC) and (BEVO)
Jacksonville Ocean Rescue Div.
Lantana Ocean Rescue Div. (Advanced)
Manatee County Beach Patrol
Martin County Ocean Rescue
Mayport Naval Station Ocean Rescue
Mexico Beach Fire Rescue (ARRT)
Miami Beach Ocean Rescue
Miami Dade Fire Ocean Rescue
Navarre Beach Safety Div. (Advanced)
Navarre Beach Safety Div. (BEVO)
Navarre Beach Safety Div. (PRWC)
Neptune Beach Lifeguards
Okaloosa County, Beach Safety Div. (Advanced)

Okaloosa Island Fire Dist. (ARRT)
 Palm Beach County Ocean Rescue
 Panama City Beach, Beach Safety Div.
 Panama City Beach Fire Rescue (ARRT)
 Pompano Beach Ocean Rescue
 Ponte Vedra Inn and Club
 Sarasota County Beach Patrol
 South Walton Fire Dist. (Advanced)
 South Walton Fire Dist. (PRWC)
 South Walton Fire Dist. (BEVO)
 St. Augustine Fire Dept. (City of)
 (ARRT)
 St. Johns County Marine Rescue
 (Advanced)
 St. Johns County Marine Rescue
 (PRWC)
 St. Johns County Marine Rescue
 (BEVO)
 Sunny Isles Beach Police Dept. –
 Ocean Rescue
 The Breakers Resort
 The Breakers Resort (PRWC)
 Vero Beach Ocean Rescue
 Volunteer Life Saving Corps
 (Advanced)
 Volunteer Life Saving Corps (BEVO)
 Volusia County Beach Safety
 (Advanced)
 Volusia County Beach Safety (PRWC)
 Volusia County Beach Safety (BEVO)
 Volusia County Sheriff's Office (ARRT)

HAWAII

Hawaii Fire Dept. Ocean Safety Div.
 Hawaii Fire Dept. Ocean Safety Div.
 (PRWC)
 Honolulu Ocean Safety Dept.
 Honolulu Ocean Safety Dept. (PRWC)
 Kamehameha Schools, Hawai'i Campus
 Kauai Fire Dept. Ocean Safety Bureau
 Kauai Fire Dept. (ARRT)
 Maui Ocean Safety Bureau
 MCCS Hawaii Aquatics (Kaneohe)
 Mauna Kea Beach Hotel

ILLINOIS

Evanston Lifeguard Services (City of)

MAINE

Ogunquit Beach Ocean Rescue
 Scarborough Beach State Park
 Wells Ocean Rescue
 York Ocean Rescue
 York Ocean Rescue (PRWC)

MARYLAND

Assateague – Maryland State Park

MASSACHUSETTS

Nantucket Lifeguard Program
 Town of Orleans – Nauset Beach

MICHIGAN

New Hampshire State Beach Patrol

NEW HAMPSHIRE

Great Lakes Rescue (ARRT)

NEW JERSEY

Alliance Beach Patrol
 Avon-by-the-Sea
 Cape May Point Beach Patrol
 Diamond Beach Patrol
 Long Beach Township Beach Patrol
 Long Branch Ocean Rescue (Advanced)
 Long Branch Ocean Rescue (PRWC)
 Monterey Beach Ocean Rescue
 New Jersey State Park Service –
 Beaches
 New Jersey State Park Service – Lakes
 North Island Lifeguards
 Ocean City Beach Patrol
 Ocean Grove Camp Meeting Assn.
 (Advanced)
 Point Pleasant Beach & Surf Club
 Sea Bright Ocean Rescue
 Sea Bright Ocean Rescue (ARRT)
 Sea Bright Ocean Rescue (PRWC)
 Sea Girt Beach Patrol
 Sea Girt Beach Patrol (BEVO)
 Sea Girt Beach Patrol (PRWC)
 Spring Lake Ocean Rescue
 Surf City Beach Patrol
 Wildwood Beach Patrol

NEW YORK

Hempstead (Town of)
 Village of Ocean Beach Lifeguards

NORTH CAROLINA

Carolina Beach Ocean Rescue
 Corolla Beach Rescue
 Duck Surf Rescue (Advanced)
 Emerald Isle Fire Dept.
 Emerald Isle Fire Dept. (PRWC)
 Emerald Isle Fire Dept. (BEVO)
 Fort Fisher Ocean Rescue

Kill Devil Hills Ocean Rescue
 (Advanced)
 Kitty Hawk Ocean Rescue (Advanced)
 Kure Beach
 Nags Head Ocean Rescue (Advanced)
 Surf City Fire Dept. (ARRT)
 Wrightsville Beach Ocean Rescue
 (Advanced)

OHIO

PHASTAR Marine Safety (Cleveland)

OREGON

American Medical Response, River
 Rescue (Advanced)
 Cannon Beach Ocean Safety Div.
 Curry County Aquatic Safety

PENNSYLVANIA

Presque Isle State Park Lifeguards

RHODE ISLAND

Little Compton (Town of)
 Westerly Town Beach

SOUTH CAROLINA

Barrier Island Ocean Rescue
 (Advanced)
 Barrier Island Ocean Rescue (BEVO)
 Charleston County Park & Recreation
 (Advanced)
 Hilton Head Island Fire Dept. (ARRT)
 Myrtle Beach Fire Dept. (ARRT)
 Myrtle Beach Surf Rescue
 North Myrtle Beach Ocean Rescue Div.
 Shore Beach Service Inc.

TEXAS

Cameron County Beach Patrol
 Corpus Christi Fire Dept. (ARRT)
 Corpus Christi Parks & Recreation
 Galveston Island Beach Patrol
 (Advanced)
 Port Aransas Surf Rescue
 South Padre Island Fire Dept.
 Beach Patrol

VIRGINIA

Lake Barcroft Association
 St. James Dept. Safety & Rescue,
 Lake Montclair
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WISCONSIN

Town of Wilson Fire Department (ARRT)

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PARTING SHOT



Curry County Oregon Lifeguard Declan Debler during rock entry training. With the many sea stacks and rock islands off the Curry County, Oregon coast, training for water entry during different swell conditions and how to safely extricate a victims is crucial. Photo: Luke Martinez

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