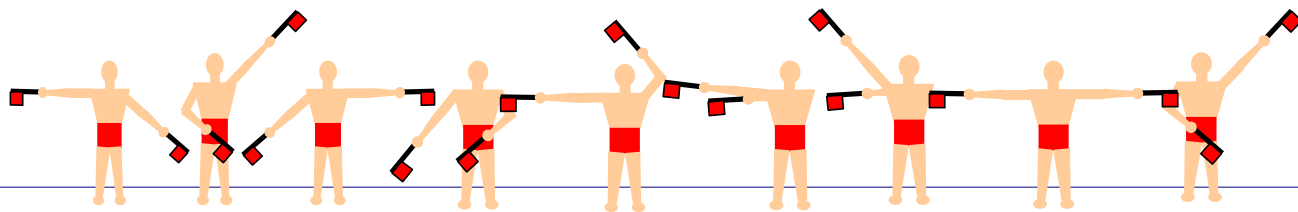


Ocean City Beach Patrol



Edition 50



Over Seventy-five
Years of Saving
Lives.

Maintain Your Role
in this Fantastic
Tradition!

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Newsletter

Fall/Winter 2010-11

Message From the Captain

The Names have changed but the rescues are the same!

In the 38 years that I have been a part of the Beach Patrol, many things have changed. The uniform has changed in color and style, the men's trunks have gotten longer (MUCH), we have replaced our steel "torpedo buoy" with a plastic "rescue can", two-way radios now replace the telephone boxes on the beach, and we now have a training academy for our new recruits just to mention a few. However, what hasn't changed at all is the primary purpose for which the Beach Patrol was first established: to rescue swimmers who get into trouble in the ocean. When I started, the "scan" was the primary tool we used to protect the crowd of bathers that ventured into the ocean, and that is still true today. When I saw someone close to danger I used my whistle and flags to direct the person away from trouble. If they were not able to keep themselves out of danger, I would jump down grab my buoy, sprint to the best entry point and swim out to the person using my knowledge of the surf and currents. Once I made contact with the victim I would reassure them and quickly return them to the safety of the beach and return to my stand, prepared to do it all over again. It is still that way for our SRTs today. But most interestingly, it was that way from the beginning days of the patrol, except they didn't use a buoy in the early years (see the article by "Lucky" on Page 3). The point I am trying to make is that the Beach Patrol lifeguards of the past functioned very much like the SRT's in 2010.

However, the Beach Patrol organization of today is very different from its beginnings. The modern Beach Patrol has improved greatly from its beginnings

both in its mission and in its operations. This statement is not an indictment of any previous group of individuals, but rather an appreciation that we have been able to build on all of the foundational work done by those who preceded us. In my perspective, it is much like when NASA put a man on the Moon. That was an incredible accomplishment, but just 66 years earlier the Wright brothers, in a very short flight, actually took the first steps toward walking on the moon. The Beach Patrol of today is just another step in an 80-year series of improvements. Being able to interact with the "Legends of Lifesaving" that took many of those earlier steps gives me a renewed appreciation for the great tradition that has been passed on to those of us who are lucky enough to still be serving this town. It is my desire to honor all of those who have given of themselves to make the Beach Patrol into the professional organization that we have become, by upholding the high standards and tradition of excellence.

The recent reunion gave me an opportunity to re-connect with men and women who I have worked with over the years going all the way back to my first years on the patrol. I was also able to meet many of the "legends" that I had previously only heard stories about. Growing up with the patrol over the past 38 years, I heard many stories from both Captains Craig and Schoepf about some "characters" from a time before me. Guys like "Lucky" Jordan, Bob Wagner,



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(Captains's Message continued from page 1)

Chuck Austin, Ells Boyd, "Bru" Brubaker, "McGuirk", "Shepanek", "Cap" Forbush", "Big Charlie", Jim Kelly, Ben Proctor, "Cutie" Savage, Tommy Price, Johnny Jarvis, Bobby Jester and many others were talked about as though we should know them by name. Now, thanks to the reunions and events like the Craig swim and the Schoepf relay I have been given the opportunity to get to know many of these "characters" from a time before 1973.

I have truly enjoyed these opportunities and am thankful for the relationships that are being formed between the "legends" and the current patrol. After all, we are only where we are because of where we have been. Thanks to everyone who has served, we are building on a firmly established foundation. The bricks that make up that foundation are the experiences and knowledge of our alumni, and we have a lot to learn from anyone who was a part of the Beach Patrol's evolution. Throughout our lives, we need to take time to listen to the older generations who have already been where we are going.

As I have spent more time in recent years with alumni who I never had the pleasure of working with, I have made several observations. First of all, the stories are still the same. They talk about "chasing" girls, parties (big beach parties), playing sports against each other and the day they surfed the big one. They talk of road trips, the rescue they almost didn't make and yes they tell stories about the Captains (just be nice). Yet, the strongest thread that connects the first Beach Patrol lifeguards to the SRT's of today's Beach Patrol is the significant place we hold in the lives of all those we have saved. It is the feeling of being "Significant" that we experience that embeds that passion about this "job" into our being so much that others notice it and ask, "Why is something you did so many years ago so important to you?" Of course no matter how hard we try we will never be able to get them to fully understand that feeling of significance.

Significance is not just due to the lives we have saved, but is also found in all the lives we impact with every rescue. For the first time in all the reunions I have attended, guards from my era were invited to attend and many did (Thanks to Vic Sprecher who was the driving force behind this year's event for including them). Some I had not seen since guarding next to them 30+ years ago. There were others who I was re-introduced to since I didn't know them when I was a regular guard. Some of those in attendance had a special significance in my life that neither of us was aware of at the time. But, now as I look back I am fully aware of the roll they played in who I am today. Greg Pittman was the first person that I knew away from the patrol that became an OCBP lifeguard (our fathers worked together). Then there was Mark McCleskey who was the Crew Chief on 43rd street where I vacationed with my family as a 14 year old. He took the time to talk with me and encouraged me to try out (His son Parker is in the JBP and Mark has re-connected with the patrol). I talked with John Swivel, the Lieutenant who gave me the entire test, one on one, and who recommended me to the Captain. So many others were there, including the guard who trained me as well as my first Crew Chief. These guards were part of my development as both a lifeguard and a man. With this in mind, we need to approach each individual that comes into our lives as though that interaction may

impact both of our lives.

In closing, I want to take this opportunity to publicly say a special "thank you" to Kristin Joson who has been a real asset in keeping the alumni connected with the Beach Patrol and who continues to volunteer her services to the Alumni. I am both thankful and blessed that I have never had to move into the ranks of alumni and that I am still a part of the Beach Patrol on a daily basis. However, I do hope that when I am no longer a current member of the patrol, that whoever takes over will value me just because I was once a part of this family we call the Ocean City Beach Patrol.

Testing and Recruiting

Testing and Recruiting

Submitted by: Captain Butch Arbin

Beginning in the early 1980's it became apparent that waiting until May and June of each season to begin recruiting and testing for that summer was no longer going to produce enough personnel to fill all of the positions for each summer. Our first response to this problem was to hold an off-site test during the winter, shortly followed by the addition of late summer testing for the following season. As the needs indicated we eventually held up to 6 off-site tests and at one point were holding 12 tests in Ocean City. In addition to these additional testing opportunities Skip Lee and I developed a long-range recruiting and retention plan to fill all available positions for each season. One of the primary goals of that plan was to have all positions filled prior to the start of our season, and we have continued to make progress toward meeting that goal. Preliminary indications from this past summer's end-of-season testing are that we will not need to conduct any off-site testing for the second year in a row.

The 2010 end-of-season Pre-Employment Physical Skills Evaluations for the upcoming 2011 season attracted 79 candidates, with 48 of those having passed all aspects of the evaluation. Considering that we had fewer candidates test for 2010 positions than for 2011, and that we only hired 40 rookies in 2010, we do not feel the need to hold any additional testing at this time. Once we hear back from SRTs who received an "A" rating in 2010 we will have a more accurate assessment of our staffing needs. If we find that we need additional recruits we can hold the scheduled June testing which still allows those who are successful to enter the final Surf Rescue Academy for the 2011 season.

Therefore, we may have already hired all the SRTs we need. Unfortunately, this means that the dozens of individuals who have already contacted me since the Labor Day weekend test, as well as the 100+ who typically begin contacting us in the late winter and spring with hopes of securing a position as an SRT will not have an opportunity for the up-coming season. This means that you will have to tell your recruits to keep checking our website and to stay in touch for a changing situation. Thanks for all you have done in helping us to realize our recruiting goal.

Information/Statistics

Jellyfish Stings

Submitted by: Lt. Wes Smith

“I’ve been stung by a jellyfish!” is a popular phrase in the late summer season in the Mid-Atlantic area, and one that is usually followed by a host of various suggestions. “Get some vinegar; use a cup of urine; put meat tenderizer on it; rub it with sand...” These remedies vary a great deal, from the acetic acid in vinegar, to the alkaline properties of ammonia. Fortunately a recent study explored the efficacy of these common remedies to settle the debate.

First, it seems much of the confusion stems from the type of jellyfish, so it helps to know a little bit about these creatures. Jellyfish are not fish at all; they are a type of gelatinous zooplankton, which tend to bloom in warm, salty water with low oxygen content. The salty water contains more iodine, which promotes the conversion from the polyp stage of the jellyfish lifespan into the mature medusa stage. When mature, the most common jellyfish in the Mid-Atlantic region are sea nettles, which have a bell shape and are a semitransparent color. Sometimes they contain small white dots or stripes that are a burgundy red or brown color. The mature sea nettles have tentacles, which surround their mouth to capture food.

Lifeguards can predict the increased blooming of jellyfish by paying attention to rising water temperatures, days without rain, and sandy-saltier water produced largely by southerly and westerly winds. In contrast, a rainy nor’easter will bring in clear Gulf Stream water, which, despite being warmer, is usually hypotonic and decreases jellyfish concentrations on the surface. Although these generalizations can be helpful, blooming is complex and attributed to the weather and currents, so the predictability is limited. Sea nettle stings are not fatal unless a serious allergic reaction occurs. However the sting can vary in pain from moderate to severe, and lasts usually 20 minutes. These jellyfish can sting even when beached or fractured in pieces. A sting is caused when the tentacles of the sea nettle make contact with a predator or bump into a human. The mechano-trauma causes nematocyst cells in the tentacles to rapidly build up pressure and burst open. Upon bursting they pierce the skin with a lance and inject venom. The venom reaches approximately 1mm below the surface of the skin, and the pain is caused by various chemical and mechanical stimuli affecting sensory nerve endings in the epidermal layer.

In contrast to sea nettles, the most dangerous and potentially deadly jellyfish is the box jellyfish. This type of jellyfish is perhaps entirely restricted to the tropical Indo-Pacific region of the world. The Mid Atlantic region may see less harmful forms of the box jellyfish, but they are rare and distinguishable from the more common sea nettles. Box jellyfish have a more developed nervous system, with a neural ring around the bell. They also contain true eyes complete with cornea, lens and retina structures. In Australia, box jellyfish usually appear between October and May and are most concentrated in flat-water conditions with light onshore breezes. In Hawaii they increase about one

week after a full moon when they enter shallower water to spawn.

Although the box jellyfish should not be a concern for Mid Atlantic beach patrons, the treatment of box jellyfish may be the source of confusion. The box jellyfish sting requires dousing the area with vinegar and removing the nematocysts with a gloved hand, and the victim is then transported to the nearest medical facility. When box jellyfish are common in Australia and Hawaii, beaches are sometimes closed and vinegar is kept by the lifeguards in preparation for sting victims. People who have witnessed this or are aware of Australian box jellyfish treatments, may assume vinegar is effective for all stings; but this is not the case.

A July, 2010 study wanted to investigate the efficacy of various treatments for other jellyfish stings such as sea nettles. In response to a sting, they tested a wide array of popular treatments on human skin. They compared pain scores and levels of irritation among various conventional treatments, such as acetic acid (vinegar), meat tenderizer, sodium bicarbonate (baking soda), ammonia, urea, and ethanol. They also compared the effects of the anesthetic lidocaine. Lidocaine works by blocking sodium channels used by sensory neurons to fire and send pain signals to the brain. Without sodium permeability, pain signals fail to reach the higher brain centers. Lidocaine can be found in anesthetic creams, oral gel and some aloe gels. BENZOCAINE also blocks pain signals and is the active ingredient in the “Sting Kill” swabs that are issued by the Beach patrol.

The researchers found that the traditional chemicals used to treat jellyfish stings resulted in an increased nematocyst discharge and, in most cases, exacerbated the sting. None of the traditional treatments resulted in improvement. However, the lidocaine DID significantly lessen the pain due to the anesthetic effects that reach 5mm below the surface of the skin. Interestingly, the greatest effects may have been due to a direct action on the nematocysts, where the lidocaine appeared to inhibit the ion channel permeability required to discharge the venom.

The problems associated with the traditional treatments of jellyfish stings (such as vinegar) has lead to alternative, more conservative recommendations such as using water to clean the area and just waiting until the pain subsides. It turns out that fresh water, being hypotonic, also increases the release of nematocyst venom and worsens the sting. Rubbing sand on the wound would also promote more pain and irritation. However, there is some evidence to suggest that the sharp edge of a credit card, or shaving the effected area can gently remove the nematocysts without worsening the sting. When considering the recent research and the type of sting common in the Mid-Atlantic region, it appears prudent for lifeguards to follow the steps summarized below:

Educate patrons about the increased risk of jellyfish stings when the water is warm and salty, like in August after several days without rain, especially during southwesterly wind conditions.

In a stung patron rule out an anaphylactic reaction by checking for a systemic (rather than localized) response to the sting and

(Continued on page 6)

“Welcome” to the Rookie Class of 2011

Submitted by: Captain Butch Arbin

I want to again welcome you into the Beach Patrol family and I hope that this is just the beginning of a lifetime of wonderful Ocean City memories. Although you have taken the first and most important step toward a career with the Ocean City Beach Patrol when you successfully completed the pre-employment physical skills test, this is the beginning of the adventure and not the end. Passing the “test” is an accomplishment to be proud of, but now the real work begins for both you and the Patrol.

Although official offers of appointment to Surf Rescue Academy will not be sent until spring 2011, after you have confirmed your availability and submitted official documentation, your responsibility is to be fully prepared and ready for the rigors of academy. As long as your availability is until at least Labor Day, Monday, September 5, 2011 you will be given a slot in a Surf Rescue Academy. However, several appointments will be given to others based on performance, past connection with the Patrol and later availability if you are planning to leave prior to Labor day.

We have the responsibility of turning you into a Surf Rescue Technician and you have the responsibility of arriving in the spring ready to take on the challenges of Surf Rescue Academy. We will provide you with the most comprehensive open water surf rescue training being taught by the best instructors available anywhere. To be successful you must prepare both personally and physically. To prepare physically you must continue to work on maintaining and improving your physical conditioning and specific skills. Although we talked about where you needed to improve during your final interview, you should take time to look at our training web resources www.ococean.com/ocbp and contact Lieutenant Wes Smith Phd, wes@miami.edu our Director of Training and a professor of Exercise Physiology at the University of Miami. To prepare personally you need to finalize all of your living arrangements as soon as possible. You may contact current members of the Patrol through Facebook or e-mail me ocbp@ococean.com and I will put you in contact with resources to find housing which includes available employee housing. Just remember... this is the beginning of the greatest adventure of your life.

Pictures of last year’s Rookie Graduation on the right. It a great event for spectators. This year’s rookie graduation is July 7th 7:30 am. Spectators can see a lot of action with live demonstrations of all skills including working with the Coast Guard.

OCBPSRA CERTIFICATION 2011: Rookie

Graduation: *Instructors*—Required for Advanced Certification-Middle Inlet-0700hrs

Rookie Graduation: *Participants*—Required for ALL Rookies—Middle Inlet—0730hrs—**Mandatory!!!**

