



Dear Fellow Lifeguards:

July 24, 2005

If the B&B seems a little harder to read this week it doesn't necessarily mean you have to run out and get your eyeglasses checked. This week there is so much material that we've had to reduce some of the type to a smaller font.

To start with I want to make a few things clear. As editor and publisher of the B&B I take literary license to express my opinion on the facts. I try to do that in the first few paragraphs of each week's edition. For those that complain about a newspaper containing opinion, sorry about that, but as I said I take literary license. Feel free to send in letters expressing contrary views. I try not to edit anyone's submissions but sometime letters get too long when space is too short. In other words if you have something to say, try to keep it short.

Now as to this week's opinion on our local management's lunacy. For those of you that worked preseason, I'm sure that you remember the unanticipated hot muggy days that drove people to the beach in unexpected numbers. In order to adequately protect those large crowds numerous Captains requested additional lifeguards to cover their beaches. Surprisingly and irresponsibly these requests were initially denied and days went by with the State playing Russian roulette with the public's lives. It took up to this week to finally get an answer as to why an adequate number of lifeguards weren't put on when requested.

The answer turns out to be that when the Lifeguard Captains (averaging about 45 years of ocean guarding experience each) requested additional manpower, citing safety reasons, the LI Parks administrator sought the wise counsel of the Park Superintendents (averaging absolutely no lifeguarding experience whatsoever) and didn't even bother to consult with a single lifeguard as to the beach situation. These Park Superintendents assured the Administration that based on their knowledge of water safety the beaches were adequately protected. Of course, since additional lifeguards to protect the public would have cost money, the Administration decided that the Park Supervisors were the ultimate experts on safety and the Lifeguard Captains weren't correct in their safety assessments. How's that for logic?

Now fast forward to this week, one of the hottest on record. Beaches are jammed and stands are open as wide as staffing permits. Once again the Park Supervision decides that they know safety better than the Captains and decide to take eleven (11) wing stands from the beaches and use them for the Volley Ball tournament. Once again, why worry about the public. After all the Park Supervisors (established experts in water safety) decided that Volley Ball is much more important than lifeguard protection. Luckily Bob Lenti was able to reach Chip Gorman who immediately reversed this lunacy and got the wing stands back to the beaches before any real damage was done. You can't make this stuff up.

Finally, talking about lunacy, this week we had 2<sup>nd</sup> step grievance hearing on four grievances that have been awaiting resolution. Parks sent down their director of personnel, their top attorney and an intern. NYSCOPBA sent down a representative and Bob Lenti, Jimmy Cash and I represented the Lifeguards. Although we have yet to receive decisions, I just wanted to bring up the State's position on one issue.

The NYSCOPBA contract requires that: ***The official personal history folder shall contain all memoranda or documents relating to such employee which contain criticism, commendation, appraisal or rating of such employee's performance on his job. Copies of such memoranda or documents shall be sent to such employee simultaneously with their being placed in his official personal history folder.***

The purpose of this provision is to prevent "Rat" files, i.e. files that contain secret criticism or charges that are used years later to discipline you or prevent you from getting a promotion. Often witnesses are no longer available or memories are not as sharp and it is much harder to defend one's self. That is also the reason that copies of such documents ***shall be sent to such employee simultaneously with their being placed in his official personal history folder.***

Well in another classical case of Orwellian logic that State took the position that the word "all" doesn't really mean "all" as the rest of the world knows it but actually means ***"only that that the State wants you to see at that time"*** and that if, years later, they do decide to use these secret charges against you, then and only then, do they have to reveal it to you. Like I said, you can't make this stuff up. I can't wait to see what an arbitrator does with that convoluted interpretation.

As to the other three grievances on returning lifeguard pay, discipline procedure and release of private medical records we have to await decisions to see if they are going to arbitration. From the looks of the logic involved so far it could mean a lot of time in Albany this winter.



*The Jones Beach Competition Team – Photo by C. Epstein*

## LOCAL UNION ELECTIONS

Well the petitions are in and the candidates are off and running. We are going to have 4 contested races this year. The contested positions and the candidates are as follows: **President:** Bob Lenti and Bob Adler - **1<sup>st</sup> Vice President:** Ed Peters, Claude George and Ron Roaldsen - **Trustee at Large:** Bruce Meiowitz and Brad Smith - **Trustee East End:** Bob Miller and Chris Rogers.

The following are uncontested positions: **2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President:** Steve Levy - **RM Trustee:** Jim Dirico - **Jones Beach Trustee:** Cary Epstein - **Treasurer:** Jay Lieberfarb - **Secretary:** Roy Lester.

We are also voting to change the seniority rule that allows officers to work preseason over lifeguards with more years seniority. Under the current rule for the preseason, a Boatswain with 3 years total would get to work before a Lifeguard 2 with 30 years seniority. During post season, seniority is the determining factor once a beach's officer positions are filled. A change in the rule would treat preseason and post season the same.

The current Seniority Rule reads as follows:

*Seniority shall be the determining factor for all of the following:*

1. All promotions from one title to a higher title.
2. All transfers and changes in status (full/part time).
3. All early/pre-season start dates.
4. All late/post season employment shall be determined by filling the facilities regular season compliment of officers. That same compliment of officers will be assigned to act in the capacities of their respective titles during post season. Remaining positions to be filled based on Lifeguard seniority regardless of rank.

The proposed Seniority Rule would read as follows:

*Seniority shall be the determining factor for all of the following:*

1. All promotions from one title to a higher title.
2. All transfers and changes in status (full/part time).
3. All early/pre-season start dates and all late/post season employment shall be determined by filling the facilities regular season compliment of officers. That same compliment of officers will be assigned to act in the capacities of their respective titles during post season. Remaining positions to be filled based on Lifeguard seniority regardless of rank

On the ballot you will be asked to check either to "Accept proposed change" or "Keep current Rule." Please make sure you check one of these.

Once you receive the ballots and the two envelopes please mark the ballots and place them in the smaller envelope, seal it and then place the smaller envelope into the bigger envelope. The bigger envelope must then be sealed **and your name printed and signed across the seal.** **Unsigned ballots will not be counted!** The ballot envelope must then be returned to your shop steward or Andy Hlavak or Susie Tighe-Foti of the election committee no later than close of business August 3, 2005. No excuses will be accepted! If you want your ballot to count make sure it is in.

At the time of counting, once it is determined that a person is eligible to vote, their smaller unmarked envelope will be taken out of the larger envelope and put in a box for later counting. This way we can assure everyone that the voting process remains secret.

Finally special thanks to Andy and Sue for taking this job!!!



Tommy stretches the Jr's during last Sunday's storm

## INTERBEACH RACES UPDATE

At last week's Shop Steward's meeting we had long discussions about the interbeach races. The general consensus is that we have to change the overall format in order to attract more participation. This year, Mark Davy is taking a lead role and several changes have already been agreed to. This year, we are bringing back age group contestants, albeit in a contracted manner. There will now be five contestant categories in some events, all scoring full points. The categories are Men's Open, Women's Open, Master's Men's (40 to 54 years of age), Veteran Men's (55 years of age and over) and Master's Women (40 years of age and over). The age categories will apply to the following events: The Run-Swim-Run, Beach Flags, 2 Mile Run, Surf Swim and the Pool Swims.

We are also trying an experiment this year with the ten-person ocean relay. This year the ages of all participants on a team will be added together for handicapping purposes. Ed Peters is figuring the ideal speed for combined age groups from a total of 200 years (average age 20 y/o) to a total of 500 years broken down in 50 year increments. The older the combined team the more of a head start they get. The race will only be between 100 and 125 yards per participant so it should go pretty quickly but, with the handicap, it will take a lot of strategy to win this. It might be worth replacing a couple of 25 years olds for a couple of 50 year olds for the extra time. More to come next week when Ed reveals the handicaps.

We are also trying to come up with some very nice awards this year including a flag for the winning team to fly for a year and Jones Beach Pins for 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> places in all categories. The t-shirts have been ordered and should be ready for the night of the party as well as the awards (which we are planning to hand out then). Food has been ordered and a DJ hired. We are also trying to put together a slide show (hint to Tom Donovan) and some raffles.

In order to provide a more equal footing this year we are combining the eastern facilities into a North Shore and a South Shore Team. The North Shore team will be comprised of Sunken Meadow, Wildwood and Orient Point and the South Shore team will be comprised of Hecksher, Montauk Downs and Hither Hills.

Finally we are introducing a new non scoring event this year for the amusement of all – a tug of war, elimination style. After the ten-person running relay each field will put forth 6 to 10 pullers (the number is not determined yet) to go against another team in a round-robin fashion until only one team is left standing. A special prize to the winners. Sounds like it could be fun.

## INTERBEACH RACE SCHEDULE

**Thursday, August 4th at Robert Moses 2 (Sunset 8:08 pm)**

Surf Rescue 5:45 p.m. 1 Man Line Pull 6:00 p.m. 2 Man Line Pull 6:15 p.m. - Run Swim Run 6:30 p.m. - Beach Flags (All Age Groups) (Prelim.) 6:45 p.m. (Finals) 7:30 p.m.

**Friday, Aug. 5th at East Bathhouse Ocean (Sunset 8:06 pm)**

Iron Man 5:30 p.m. - Individual Kayak Race 6:00 p.m. - Individual Surfboard Race 6:15 p.m. - Kayak Relay 6:45 p.m. - 2 Mi. Run (All Age Groups) 7:00 p.m. 10 Guard Ocean Relay (Handicap by Total Age) 7:20 p.m.

**Saturday, August 6th at East Bathhouse (Sunset 8:05 pm)**

Surfboat Race 6:00 p.m. - Board Relay 6:15 p.m. - Surf Swim (All Age Groups) 6:30 p.m. - 10 Guard Running Relay 7:00 p.m. - Tug of War 7:30 p.m. Pool Races (All Age Groups) 8:00 p.m. - Pool Relay 8:30 p.m.

**PARTY AFTERWARDS- Food, Beer & Music**

## Shop Stewards Meeting

**Sunday, July 31, 2005 - 10:15 a.m. - WBH Meeting Room. Make sure your beach is there!**

See us on the web at [www.jonesbeach.com](http://www.jonesbeach.com) or [www.jblifeguard.com](http://www.jblifeguard.com) -Till next time - Roy J. Lester - e-mail: [BucketBuoy@AOL.Com](mailto:BucketBuoy@AOL.Com)

## COMMUNICATION 101

By Steve Levy

Union negotiations are often like NBA fights – lots of reacting, yapping, and slapping where no punches are really thrown and no one gets hurt. When it comes to our beach communications system and emergency care procedures, there's been a good deal of negotiations and lots of posturing but little progress. *Here's the problem...*

Culture is getting in the way of progress to the potential detriment to our customers – the beach and pool going public. Culture is what requires fields to first call Operations in the case of any emergency. Culture is also what seems to be keeping us from having a world-class intra/inter-beach communication system as well as AEDs at each field.

Sitting on the stand yesterday, I listened as Rat was talking about how his supply of Buds was running low, the fish weren't bitin', and his girlfriend was mad at him for taking the day to go fishing. I also wondered how Rat feels when we intrude on his fishing when we broadcast the need of the services of an EMT. I know that lifeguards are not viewed as second class citizens by Park Management but I often scratch my bald head trying to figure out if someone other than us believes that the customer must come first. By the way, it is also my understanding that not all fields have radios. *Does this make sense to you?*

Speaking of AEDs, we've all been trained in them – a requirement of employment – yet despite years of requests we still don't have them at our fields to practice on nor are they immediately available if we need them. To the Park's credit we have more than enough AEDs to go around, yet some element of culture is preventing them from being housed in our shacks. I can't help wondering if an AED in the lifeguards' hands, rather than waiting 5 or so minutes for it to be brought to the beach, might have made a difference in a life last Wednesday.

Our Executive Board and especially Cary Epstein have been vocal about upgrading our communication systems and improving our ability to provide as-soon-as-possible care to customers in distress. Purchase orders have been signed and are, as of yet, still mired in the system. Let's take this time to think about additional ways that culture is functioning as an obstacle to improvement: How about welcoming the EMTs into our union? How about EMT training for lifeguards?

If our Long Island region is to remain the best-of-the-best for customer experience then elements of the existing culture must also change and the customer must come first. *Park Management, the customers are speaking; are you listening?*

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Editor: Let's preface what is about to be written here by saying the following: Regardless of what any of us feel *personally* about the Executive Board, you have to give them credit where credit is due. Being a member of the Executive Board is a time consuming, laborious, thankless job. If you don't agree with this, or with the past and future decisions of the Executive Board then run for election this summer and show us how to do it better. Just keep in mind that this commitment may require you to spend some quality, summer wave days in meetings representing and fighting for fellow lifeguards.

With that said, there is one issue that was mentioned in the July 3<sup>rd</sup> edition of the Bucket & Buoy that commands the attention of the Executive Board. The article in question informed us all that on a yearly basis there is anywhere from 6 to 9 full time, ocean positions held for new hires. Apparently, according to the article, the state and the union came to an agreement that 6 full time ocean spot were to be held each year for new hires. This year the administration held 9 full time ocean spots for the new hires. While there is an inherent need to hold a *FEW* full time ocean spots to attract the best lifeguards (in my opinion 3) there is a silent majority out there that is not being properly represented at this time. These silent majority members are those union paying lifeguards who are not getting out of their still water positions for 3 or 4 years. They are often the younger, less influential, lifeguards.

Apparently, years ago the state and the union agreed to leave slots for the new hires. That is fine, or *was* fine at 6 spots, when the most time spent by a new hire in still water was 1 year. In some circumstances an 'outback' lifeguard had to do another year in still water once they made it 'inside' the Park. Since that time, through cutbacks, re-treads and a host of other circumstances, things have changed. THREE or FOUR years for a UNION PAYING member to be prevented from leaving the doldrums of the pool or the bay, is much too long. It's time for the Union to again address this issue with its members and ultimately the administration. It is time that we take a re-vote on this issue. *Pete Clark - Field 6*

## THE COMICS

John complained to his co-worker that he didn't know what to get his wife for her birthday. "She already has everything she wants, and anyway, she can buy herself whatever she likes."

"Here's an idea," said the co-worker. "Make up your own gift certificate that says, 'Thirty minutes of great loving, any way you want it.' I guarantee she'll be enchanted."

The next day, John's co-worker asked, "Well? Did you take my suggestion?" "Yes," said John. "Did she like it?" his co-worker asked.

"Oh, yes!" said John, "She jumped up, kissed me on the forehead and ran out the door, yelling, 'See you in 30 minutes!'"