

bucket buoy



Dear Fellow Lifeguards:

September 4, 2006

Three days of sweep and swell. As Cary says in his Letter to the Editor (below), nothing like surf to take a true lifeguard's mind off controversy. Ernesto moved its way up the coast just in time for some playful Labor Day weekend water sports. Watching 40 lifeguards drift to the west in water no one in their right mind would go into truly showed the real nature of the Jones Beach Lifeguard Corps and what we are all about.

Well as the season comes to an end and as I put out the last *Bucket and Buoy* I reflect on the summer just past. Speaking for myself it was one of the most difficult summers since the union's inception. From the beginning of the summer when NYSCOPBA disbanded our Executive Board, (and the State was all to willing to go along with it) we have had to fight our usual Labor Management battles with an employer who refused to meet with us. Our grievances have been ignored, our members have been denied representation at discipline hearings and NYSCOPBA has done what they can to make our task all the more difficult, often ignoring our calls for weeks at a time.

To make the matter even more difficult we were forbidden to have Shop Steward meeting on the clock and the State tried to shut down our newsletter. Through this all we survived and grew stronger. We won our decertification fight after 23 years and finally brought to the attention of the politicians the injustices that go on down here. Our Junior Lifeguard program grew and continued to flourish despite the State's efforts.

The same group of guards that stand up every year continued to come forward and make things happen. We had our competition team, our races, our party and we got our T-shirts, all despite the obstacles the State put in our way.

And in one of the most consequential efforts to move forward in the last three decades, last Wednesday your entire Executive Board met with one of the most powerful labor groups in the State of New York to discuss a possible affiliation.

As to where we will be next May, your guess is as good as mine. But for now let me just say thank you to all those who helped us through these difficult yet momentous times.



Jen's floating on air in the recent Tobay Triathlon

ADLER'S YEAR END EDITORIAL

This editorial is in three parts: Thanks, Leadership, and Future. First, thank you to all those who put themselves on the line and went on strike 30+ years ago so that the rest of us actually have the extraordinary job we enjoy today. Those Lifeguards were the "real deal", enduring New York State's ruthless anti-labor tactics and loss of wages during their successful strike of 1971. We owe them a huge debt of gratitude and respect. On the other hand, there are a very few who are amongst our ranks who are true imposters. They never originally qualified to be a member of the JBLGC, and/or have never been the real deal. These charlatans shy away from rescues and don't put themselves on the line when it really counts...you know who you are and so do your fellow lifeguards.

An entire book can be written on them, so I will leave that issue to others who would waste their time on these frauds.

Secondly, I'd like to address leadership within our Lifeguard Corps ranks. These leaders are those few individuals who are surely the real deal, putting themselves on the line for the rest of the Corps membership. They have felt the sting of darts flung by their own fellow guards who complain and whine about what was done - or not done, and how it was not done to their liking. Our real leaders have stepped up to be on the Executive Board, past and present. They have been the originators of programs like Junior Lifeguards; CPR certification on the clock; standardized Rookie Training; fought for improved equipment and issued uniforms; organized race teams, t-shirts, inter-beach races and parties; set up the courses for competitions or ran them; etc. In other words, the leaders of our elite group of lifesavers are doers.

The real deal leaders have gone to Albany on your behalf, confronted management toe to toe for your benefit, and have taken on thankless positions and spent thousands of their own money for the benefit of all. The very best in baseball strike out two thirds of the time when they get up to bat. Have our leaders made some mistakes? Absolutely...that is how we all learn, from putting our ass on the line and screwing up from time to time. But leaders put themselves out there and take on the responsibilities that others won't do. It is very easy to bad-mouth leaders, but it is a unique individual who puts himself in the line of fire for others to benefit.

The future of the JBLGC needs leaders, not complainers and whiners. If you want to be on the Executive Board, run for it, attend the numerous meetings during the off-season, and contribute to the causes with specific professional knowledge (legal, financial, human resources, technical, etc.). We need to improve many things. Whether it be redesigning wing stands to be lighter (the single most problem commented on in an informal survey); better signs (direct road traffic to dissipate crowds to other fields for safety; instruct patrons how to plant an umbrella; cover both sides of the crow's feet; etc); set standards that are followed for pre/post season staffing; having management work with us, not cause obstacles to safety; obtaining professional vehicles for emergency lifeguard response; the list is much longer as to what needs to be improved, but who listens and then actually gets things done?

Too many believe the Corps is about them and what they as individuals get away with. How selfish a belief this is! True leadership is never easy but for some to believe that the current Lifeguard leaders are hurting the Corps means someone has turned a deaf ear and blind eye to how management has acted for the past three decades. We want this job to be available to generations of future lifeguards and provide the mechanisms for them to enjoy it as we have without all the obstacles and retribution.

It is unconscionable that our Lifeguard Corps must fight management to improve safety and working conditions, but that is the reality. Imagine what we could achieve if Lifeguard management was competent and productive and worked with our Corps' leaders to improve safety and efficiency? What would it be like to have help instead of complacency and retaliation? - Bob



The effects of Saturday's 50 mph gusts on the Field 6 Crew

THE 2006 DIRECTORY

Well it is just about ready to arrive – the 2006 Lifeguard Directory. Thanks in a large part to the efforts of Tom Donovan, Steve Levy, Mike Capobianca, artist Chris Coffin (who designed the lovely cover you see to the right) and the staff at my office, by next weekend we should have the directory out. We are not sure of the distribution method yet as we are still trying to get a sponsor so that we won't have to charge for it. If anyone knows a company that would be interested in the back cover for about \$1,000.00 please let us know.



A final photo of RM hosted Race day (Photo by Epstein)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Editor: All I know is that I think I may have had one of the most fun days in my 9 years at the beach on Saturday. We were all in the shack at the Central Mall when we decided to hold the crew body surfing session around noon. We caravanned over to Field 6, where we were debating if we should commandeer their shack and personal belongings, or challenge them to join us in mother natures fury. (We choose to challenge them!) Within 5 minutes, there must have been 40 lifeguards in water! Everyone was hootin, and hollaring with the biggest smiles on their faces. (I have proof, the water pics are getting developed!) For anyone on the beach, it must have just looked like a sea of heads floating by as the sweep just took us West. Along the journey we picked up lifeguards from all fields! Before you knew it, we drifted down to Field one where everyone got out for a memorable group photo. At that point, some of us choose to take the long sand pelting walk back (which by the way REALLY HURT), and others continued on to their final destination of WEII! (Imagine that, riding the waves all the way from Field 6 to WEII in 45 minutes!)

Seriously, I think that was one of the most memorable and fun bodysurfing experiences I have had in my 9 year tenure at the beach. I felt very proud today (Saturday 9/2/06) to be a Jones Beach Lifeguard. The commradery, unity and overall feeling between all the lifeguards in the water was just amazing. Through thick and thin, we are a brother and sisterhood. Through the ups and downs we need to remember moments like that, cherish them and make them occur more often! Have a safe, happy and healthy Labor Day weekend and more importantly a fantastic winter. Until the next session.... Cary Epstein

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Dear Editor: Your retort to my letter to the editor, in response to the anti Semitic editorials, misrepresents and neglects to understand or address the essence of my rebuttal. With 50 years experience I am well aware of the importance of a strong and well-rooted brotherhood that effectively interacts with its members in tackling relevant issues while always keeping one's eye on public safety. If you believe you've identified a serious concern regarding a pattern of discriminatory practices by the State Administration then formally organize your pervasive empirical evidence and initiate proceedings as appropriate to seek a fair and balanced resolution. You took issue with several of the descriptive words in my earlier response characterizing your editorial ranting as "sadly comical" or "incoherent". I can assure you no humor was intended nor offered. In my opinion, reporting this issue with its loose facts, implied charges of political corruption including strong armed police tactics and floating innuendos of the State Park's efforts to "purify" the Life Guard Corps is wholly irresponsible and cheapens our collective cred-

itability especially since I am sure most are not in agreement with the problem as you see it. You should separate the wheat from the chaff on this issue and stop continually dragging inflammatory and repetitive examples through the B&B weekly. If there is a true underlying problem try to get it resolved in a professional manner that enhances the Jones Beach Lifeguard Corps not diminish it. - Bob Burkley Captain - RM 4/5

Dear Bob – While I am glad that you acknowledged that you had not intended humor with your finding of the editorial "comical" I am afraid I do not understand what problems you have with the facts as presented. Once again I will present them to you. They are as follows: *Fact: The vast majority of lifeguards in our Corps are not Jewish.* *Fact: The vast majority of all threatened disciplines and denials of rights this year have been to lifeguards who are Jewish.* *Fact: 18 lifeguards failed to disclose prior convictions on their applications.* *Fact: Only one of these 18 lifeguards was arrested for this.* *Fact: That lifeguard was African-American.* *Fact: The rest were not.* *Fact: A Lifeguard was denied Medical leave this year.* *Fact: Since the first year of Medical leave no other lifeguard has been denied this leave.* *Fact: That lifeguard was Jewish.* *Fact: A lifeguard was interrogated by the police this year about his CPR card.* *Fact: No other lifeguard has ever been interrogated about his CPR card.* *Fact: That lifeguard was Jewish.* *Fact: A lifeguard CPR instructor had his co-instructor and students interrogated by the police this year about his CPR class.* *Fact: No other lifeguard instructor has ever had his class interrogated by the police.* *Fact: That lifeguard was Jewish.*

Come on Bob. These are not, as you characterize them, "loose facts." They are exactly what they are. Each person can come to their own conclusions as to what they mean. I gave you my opinion that this merits investigation. Take it or leave it.

As to your individual opinion that exposing facts "cheapens our collective creditability" I have to express my opinion that nothing "cheapens our collective creditability" as much as ignoring wrongs that are being perpetrated on your brother lifeguards.

I am sorry that this issue has touched such a raw nerve with you. Other than the fact that it might embarrass friends in the administration I can not understand your reaction. These are your brothers that are being attacked. Don't you think that after all these years you owe them the slightest bit of loyalty? - Roy



Prez recoups after sitting a wing stand (Photo & caption by Clerici)

THE COMICS

Thanks to Ed Peters

A blonde motorist was about two hours from San Diego when she was flagged down by a man whose truck had broken down. The man walked up to the car and asked, "Are you going to San Diego?"

"Sure," answered the blonde, "do you need a lift?"

"Not for me. I'll be spending the next three hours fixing my truck. My problem is I've got two chimpanzees in the back which have to be taken to the San Diego Zoo. They're a bit stressed already so I don't want to keep them on the road all day. Could you possibly take them to the zoo for me? I'll give you \$100 for your trouble."

"I'd be happy to," said the blonde. So the two chimpanzees were ushered into the back seat of the blonde's car and carefully strapped into their seat belts. Off they went.

Five hours later, the truck driver was driving through the heart of San Diego when suddenly he was horrified!! There was the blonde walking down the street and holding hands with the two chimps, much to the amusement of a big crowd. With a screech of brakes he pulled off the road and ran over to the blonde.

"What the heck are you doing here?" he demanded, "I gave you \$100 to take these chimpanzees to the zoo."

"Yes, I know you did," said the blonde, "but we had money left over..... so now we're going to Sea World."