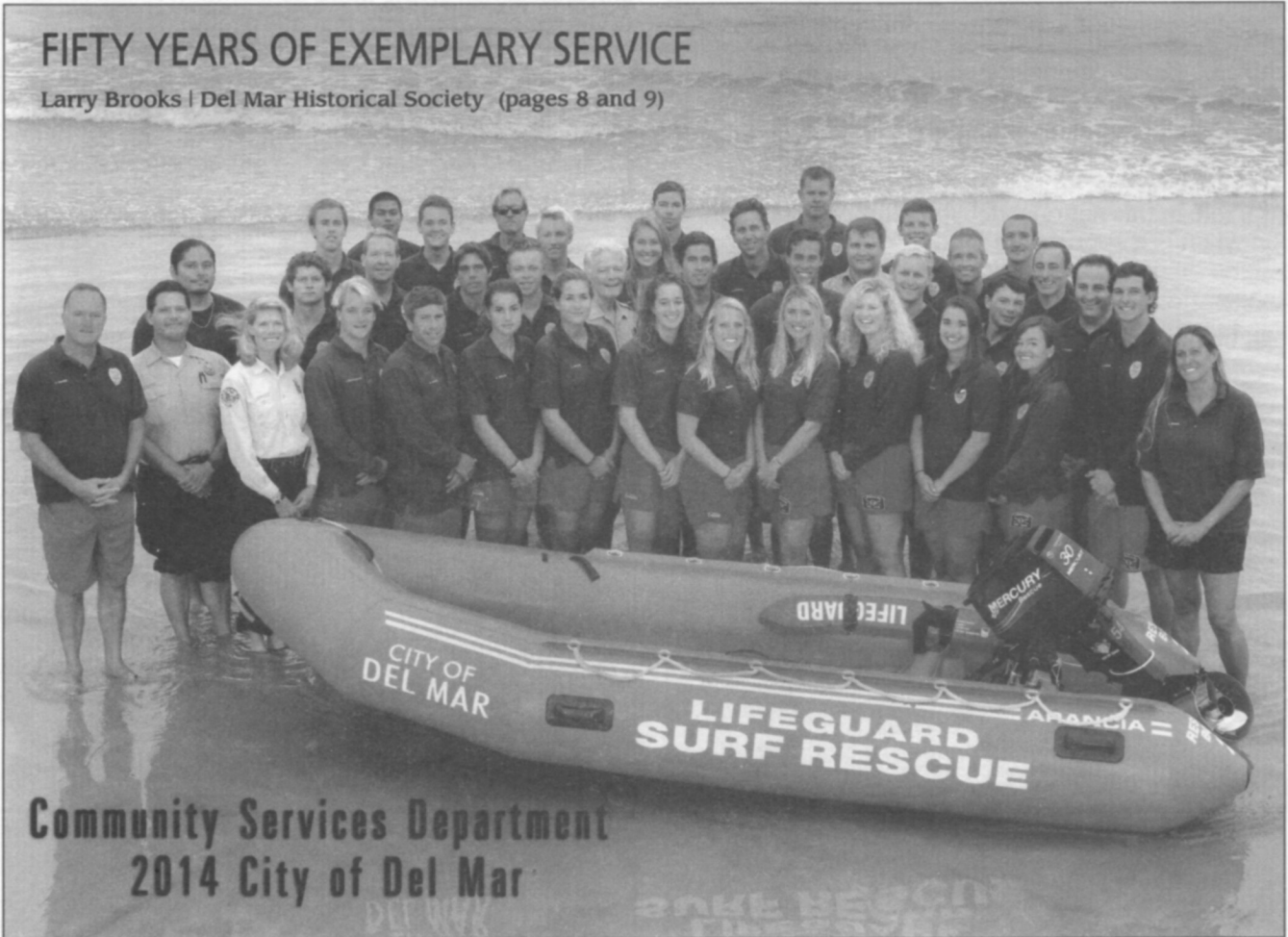


SANDPIPER

FIFTY YEARS OF EXEMPLARY SERVICE

Larry Brooks | Del Mar Historical Society (pages 8 and 9)



Community Services Department
2014 City of Del Mar

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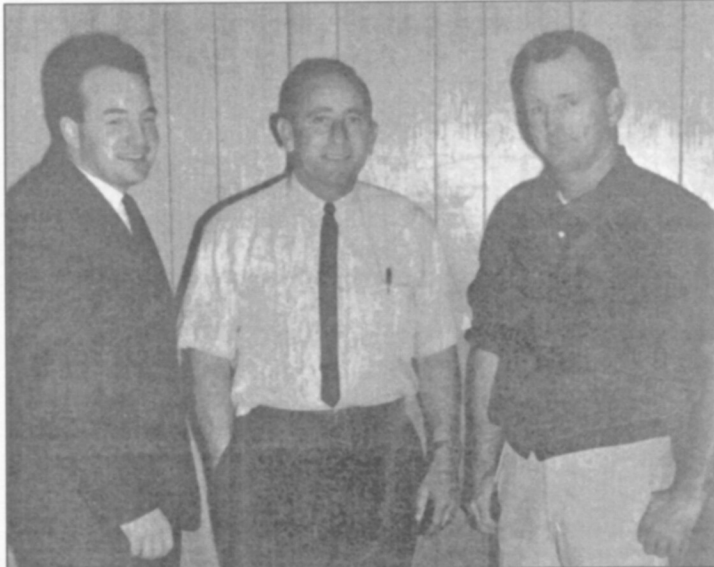
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THE CAPTAIN – In a gesture typical of his cooperative attitude, Del Mar's new Lifeguard Captain Gardner W. Stevens center, removed his coat to match the informal dress of Mayor Earl Maas during an unofficial discussion session at City Hall. City Administrator kept himself fully clothed, explaining that he had not completely thawed out yet from his recent vacation in North Dakota.

THE CAPTAIN – In a gesture typical of his cooperative attitude, Del Mar's new Lifeguard Captain [Gardner] W. Stevens center, removed his coat to match the informal dress of Mayor Earl Mass during an unofficial discussion session at City Hall. City Administrator [Paul Zimmer] kept himself fully clothed, explaining that he had not completely thawed out yet from his recent vacation in North Dakota.

THEIR BEAT IS THE BEACH!

Larry Brooks | Del Mar Historical Society

When the City of Del Mar was incorporated on July 15, 1959, the lifeguard service was contracted from the County of San Diego. The county manned two stations from March to October. The fledgling city's proposed budget for its first year was as follows:

Proposed Del Mar Budget 1959	
Lifeguards (contract with county)	\$22,000
Street Maintenance (contract with county)	\$20,000
Fire service (contract the State Dept of Forestry)	\$14,700
Police service (contract with county)	\$10,500
City Clerk	\$5,000
City Attorney	\$4,000
City Treasurer	\$250

During the City's first few years many things changed. The "city hall" moved from the billiard room of the old Hotel Del Mar to a vacant room over the Speedee Mart on Maiden Lane. A movement to un-incorporate and join the City of San Diego was quelled. Other battles over the City's finances raged, and one of these was the contract with the county for lifeguard services, which became a major



Del Mar Lifeguards 1965. Front row (l to r) Jack Ross, Gardner Stevens, Ron Jensen. Back row (l to r) Paul Krause, Gerry Meir, Peter Critchlow. Courtesy Del Mar Historical Society.



1965 Del Mar Lifeguard Headquarters. Courtesy Del Mar Historical Society.

Golden Guards



HEAVY SUMMER BEACH traffic will soon start and the area lifeguard captains are preparing, training, and increasing their staff. At the Del Mar Beach, Capt. Gardner Stevens and five new lifeguards put up a temporary tower at the 20th Street beach. Del Mar now has a tower at 17th, 20th, and 25th Streets to increase surveillance of swimmers.

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campaign issue during the elections of 1964.

Earl Maas, who was appointed to the City Council in 1963 to fill the seat vacated by Bill Arballo, won re-election in 1964. Maas had been a lifeguard in Los Angeles before moving to Del Mar and made Del Mar having its own lifeguard department a campaign issue. Shortly after his successful re-election he convinced the rest of the Council not to renew the county's contract and start a Del Mar lifeguard department.

A fellow Los Angeles lifeguard, Gardner Stevens, knocked on Maas's door one evening and said, "I hear you



2013 Del Mar Lifeguard Beach Safety Center. Courtesy Del Mar Lifeguards.

want to set up a lifeguard service." @ Stevens was selected from thirty-two applicants as Del Mar's first lifeguard captain. Stevens set up the old county lifeguard tower from the Del Mar pier (fondly referred to as "the silo"), and the new Del Mar Lifeguard Department began service on March 1, 1965.

Maas, even though not officially a Del Mar lifeguard, would work shifts in the lifeguard towers when, as he says, "There was a strong south swell and bad rips." Today, Maas considers the establishment of the Del Mar lifeguard service as one of his proudest moments.

Over the next eighteen years, Stevens increased the department in both size and reputation. In November 1982, Grant Larson relieved the retiring Stevens as Captain. Larson joined the department in 1966 while a student at SDSU and a local surfer. He retired in 1998, after thirty-two years of service to the Del Mar Lifeguard department.

His legacy is continuing the high standards set by Stevens and leading teams to establish lifeguard systems in Peru and Costa Rica.

In 1998, Pat Vergne became Captain (now called Chief) of the Del Mar lifeguards. Pat began his lifeguard career with the county in Solana Beach while still a junior at Torrey Pines High School and joined Del Mar service in 1981. The traditions of excellence, community

service and international competition have continued with the addition of an international exchange program with New Zealand. The department now has five fulltime and fifty part-time lifeguards, plus three parking enforcement officers, two community services folks, and one Park Ranger, with an annual budget of about \$850,000.



THE NEW LIFEGUARDS at the Del Mar beaches are receiving training, more training, and still more training after passing rigid tests. Capt. Stevens demonstrates how to apply oxygen mask to Grant Larson. Other lifeguards are Brad Smith, left, Chris Albertson, Bob Cozens, Stevens, and Scott Williams. (Citizen Photo)

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Vintage Del Mar. From a 2006 calendar commissioned by the Friends of the Powerhouse. Courtesy Friends of the Powerhouse.

In the fifty years, there have been only three Captains, and incidentally, Earl Maas had a hand in the selection of all three. Also, there have been no drownings in guarded areas over those fifty years – a truly exemplary service.

Alumni of the Del Mar Lifeguard Department have gone on to become doctors, lawyers, firefighters, State Department diplomats, teachers, airline pilots, accountants, a Superior Court judge, and career lifeguards. ■