

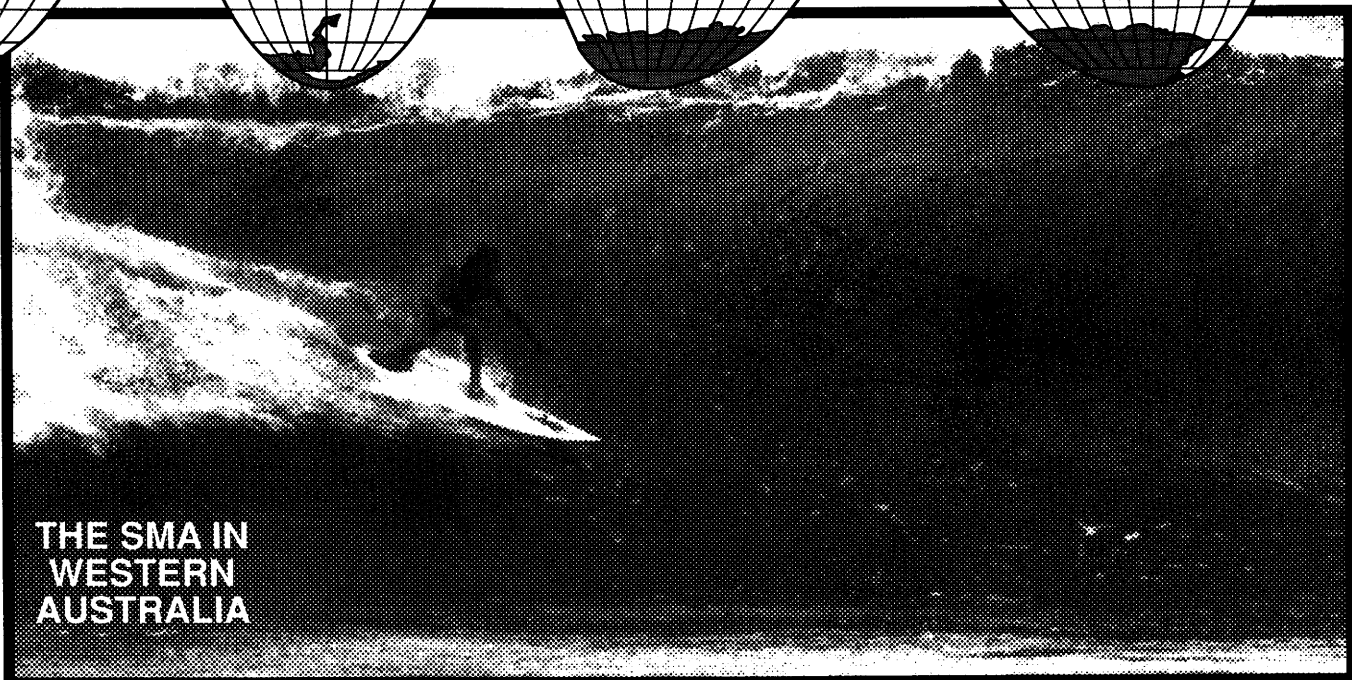
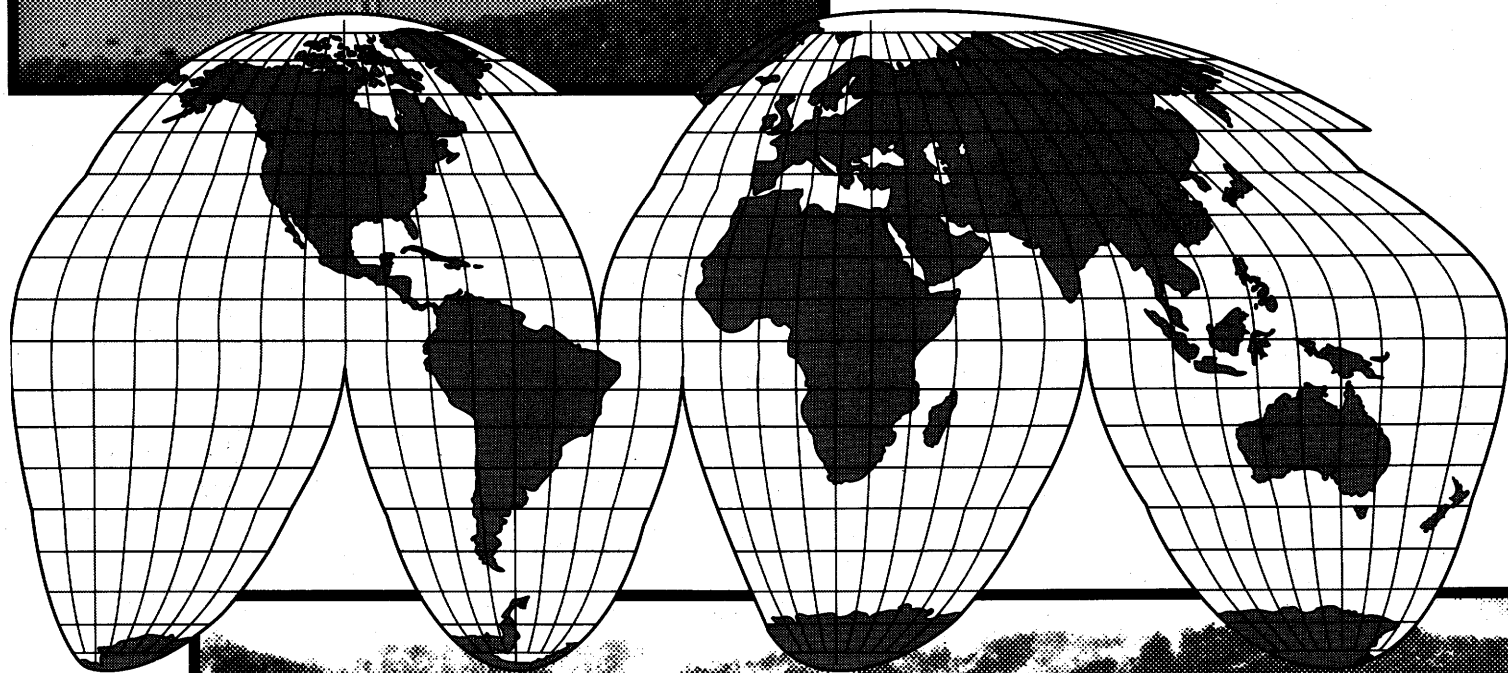
# SURFING MEDICINE

THE JOURNAL OF THE SURFER'S MEDICAL ASSOCIATION

Issue #6, Fall, 1990

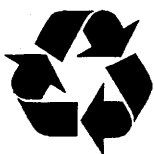
THE SMA IN  
COSTA RICA

## GLOBAL SURF MEDICINE



THE SMA IN  
WESTERN  
AUSTRALIA

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Cover Photos: Upper: Simone Gillett, early morning walk at Pavones, Costa Rica; no one out. Photo by Mark Renneker  
Lower: Who in the SMA could it be? The Bluff, Western Australia. Photo by John Small

## EDITOR'S NOTES

Over the past few months, there has been a distinct "greening of the SMA" - a process of ecological concerns moving to the forefront of our activities. It's a process that is in keeping with our Sixth Wave: "to protect and preserve the surfers' natural environment: the waves, the ocean, and our beaches."

Environmental and eco-medical issues were part of last year's annual SMA conference (the Bluff Conference, in Western Australia), came center stage in the SMA Costa Rica conference earlier this year, and are the focus of the upcoming SMA Tavarua conference. The arena of surf medicine has become global, and with strong SMA efforts in both America and Australia, we are bihemispheric.

The "all-photo" Fiji issue of the journal, garnered rave reviews and an avalanche of sign ups for the next Fiji trip. This issue will be the "less photos-more

filling" issue. Not that it doesn't have some great photos, it's just that a lot has transpired in the past few months that needs to be communicated to the membership.

The last journal came out almost ten months ago - which means we haven't made good on our plan of putting it out biannually (every six months). However, in the interim we put out a separate SMA membership directory - a journal-equivalent job - having realized that the SMA had doubled in size in the past year (from 250 members to over 500), and that the directory was too large to fit within an issue of the journal. It took some doing on Tony Peckham's part, but the membership data is now fully computerized; future directories will be easier to publish, and a membership dues reminder-system is in full operation.

The other delay was that this issue was supposed to be edited by members of the Australian SMA, and... Well, you know the joke about how many Austra-

lians it takes to screw in a light bulb. Four: one to go for the Fosters, one to screw in the bulb - and after he's finished breaking it, another to screw in a replacement bulb, and, finally, one to go look for the guy who went for the Fosters.

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# ABLAZE WITH STOKE: THE SMA INTO ITS FOURTH YEAR

by Mark Renneker, M.D.

An in absentia address to the Fourth International Surfer's Medical Association conference, June 24 - July 8, 1989 [updated to July 1990], at the Bluff, Western Australia. Written by Mark Renneker, stuck in San Francisco with a crook back; delivered by Geoff Booth, attending the conference despite his crook knee (what a Man!).

"As a typical example of the hopelessly macho surfer mindset, and as a supreme example of why the SMA needs to exist, let me say at the outset that my injury is worse than any of your injuries. Go on, I challenge you. My bulging blob of herniated 4th-5th lumbar disk and the pain it causes when I bend forward or sideways and it crunches against various nerves and ligaments is certainly a match for what you might be suffering from. Geoff Booth's deranged knee - hah!, merely a malingerer; Brian Lowdon's little neck problems, supposedly attributable to over-zealous chiropractors ("aren't they all," Brian might say) - hardly worth mentioning; only, perhaps, could my problem be seen as rivaled by what is apparently some kind of mental illness - I'm referring, of course, to the sheer mania of that cockney-accented, Rad-hatted, Napoleon on-the-loose, Jim Bradley.

Coming on the heels of surfing my brains out in the best ever surf at Tavarua, at the March SMA conference, an inopportune sneeze on May 6th popped my disc out (a disc that, much as I hate to admit it, was first damaged while surfing in Portugal six years ago). Now, six weeks out, I'm heavily into a back rehabilitation exercise program, cranking out three hundred situps a day, etc., etc. Until this past week I couldn't sit in a chair for much longer than an hour, so it seemed an impossibility to spend 24 hours sitting in a plane to get to Western Australia, then an additional day sitting in a bouncing jeep heading up to the Bluff, and hope to do more than crawl into the bush and be put out of my misery by a tiger snake. Surfing

would have been out of the question - and, in fact, my back rehab plan calls for me to not try to standup surf until August.

[I did standup surf then, and managed a surfing trip to Northern Scotland the next month, but despite continued aggressive non-surgical back rehabilitation, I'm still plagued by daily episodes of back pain and discomfort over a year later. At some point, I'll make myself the subject of a Case Study for the Journal - stopping short of autopsy results, I hope.]

So, while I stay at home and heal, I want you to know that I'm truly unhappy to not be there with you. I realize the importance of this meeting, particularly in terms of it being the first SMA conference in Australia. It should be a landmark event, perhaps even on par with the first ever SMA conference at Tavarua, in September 1986. Certainly it is a portentous event, with tremendous potential for generating scads of SMA-related projects in Australia. How, then, can I be part of these meetings without actually being there? I can't share in the magic surf you



*Me and me' back, listing.  
Photo by Jessica Dunne*

are getting (other than in my imagination), but I can lend some perspective to what you are trying to do there as far as the SMA goes.

Come September, the SMA will enter the fourth year of its existence. We all know what a meteoric growth the SMA has shown; it has been ablaze with stoke from the start. Rather than catalogue its many achievements, all of which are well-documented in our journal, I want to instead describe what I see happening - or not happening - now. I want to raise questions and express challenges, and give you something to chew on.

To begin with, and as an overview, let me say that I see the SMA as truly being an association, rather than an institution. There is no actual entity, only the interactions and communications (the "association") between a number of highly individualistic people who have in common an interest in surfing and health. There are practically no rules in the SMA, except: (1) the only excuse for not doing SMA work is if you went surfing, and, (2) any member can initiate an SMA project or act in the name of the SMA, and the more members they run their plan by, the better it will be. So far this has worked out quite well, with very few mistakes having been made or member's taking advantage of the privilege of having the implicit trust of all of the other members. In many cases, it has been a matter of doing what you might have otherwise done solely as an individual (e.g., writing an article for a surfing magazine on a health subject), but to instead do it in the name of the SMA - burying your ego slightly, doing it as the voice or intention of the SMA (perhaps donating any proceeds from the effort to the SMA, as well).

When the SMA was formed, six goals were articulated - and they have helped guide members' activities quite nicely. I want to work through each of these goals, or "waves," as we've called them, as a way of charting our present course.

**The First Wave: The number one goal of the SMA is to educate surfers so they can spend minimal time hassling with doctors and maximum time surfing.**

The major arena for educating surfers is through the surfing magazines. And in the name of the SMA, the greatest impact has undoubtedly been through the Dear Surf Docs column with *Surfer* magazine. Two years ago I set up an arrangement with *Surfer* magazine whereby the SMA would answer surfer's letters as a Dear Abby-like column, and that the payment for those columns would go directly to the SMA. With myself and Kevin Starr as the column's editors, the strength of the column lies in the body of SMA member consultants that help answer the letters. Kevin and I phone or send a copy of most every letter to one or more relevant SMA consultant members as a way of getting a range of ideas and information to present in the column. In effect, then, we act as a clearing-house on a given topic. Thus far, Kevin and I have found that we need to write all of the replies that we publish - not that other members writing efforts aren't good enough, but it's a way of maintaining a consistent style for the column. The column generates about \$250 to \$500 per month for the SMA. Also, in the name of the SMA, we frequently collaborate with *Surfer* magazine on health-related articles - writing *Surfer* Tips, etc. And, to their benefit and ours, they've grown accustomed to using our board of consultants as a way of fact-checking health information for their other articles.

Our work with *Surfer* magazine has given the SMA good visibility in the surfing world. We frequently get letters and phone calls because of it - leading to many new memberships. It eats up about two days per month for both Kevin and myself, and with Kevin starting internship we have told *Surfer* that the column will need to begin carrying the proviso that we can only answer those letters that are published. [This was done.] Up until now we have been answering all letters. The only way we could keep up that level of service would be to hire a part-time secretary, and we've asked *Surfer* to look for a sponsor to cover those costs - that they could be named at the top or bottom of the column as its sponsor (i.e., free advertising). I'm not optimistic that *Surfer* will come through, though - and, unless an SMA member takes responsibility for that task, it probably won't happen. [It didn't.]

The SMA Surf Docs column is 99% an SMA-USA effort. The lag-time and expense of using Australia members as consultants is unfortunately unwieldy. If you can think of a way around that problem, let's hear it. (FAX now available.)

Although Geoff Booth is a stalwart SMA member, his Dr. Geoff column for *Tracks* predates and is not (not yet, anyway) an SMA column. Geoff is the original and greatest surf doc writer of all of us, and we modeled the SMA *Surfer* column after his, but also structured it differently (as I've explained above, with it being interwoven with a large number of consultants and multiple opinions, and also that we early on set a more serious tone for it, avoiding the 'cocks and cunts'

letters Geoff receives). Geoff has said that "Dr. Geoff is dead," more in the vein that "Paul (of the Beatles) is dead" (and, of course, he never was), but one topic of discussion at your meetings might be how to begin shifting the *Tracks* column into more of an SMA-multimember input vehicle (if Geoff is willing to help it move in that direction, of course). In the way that the *Surfer* column has become the cornerpost of the SMA here in the USA, the same would likely be true for Australia. Jim Bradley, in the name of the SLSA, and Mark Gillett and Brian Lowdon, and others of you, have published health pieces in various Australian surfing magazines, but what I'm proposing is an all-out SMA assault. Be it with *Tracks* (and Rod Kirsup, A.K.A. "Dr. Bob"), or another periodical. Let it become your rallying point, your focus - a way to further draw together your association of Australian SMA members.

There have also been quite a number of articles written about surfing and health and the SMA that have appeared in various newspapers (mostly coastally-based) here in the USA (about 30 [40] such pieces, to date), but these have been low-impact in terms of reaching and educating surfers.

The largest and most lasting impact in terms of the number one goal of the SMA, that of educating surfers about how to better take care of themselves, will come from *The Handbook of Surf Medicine* - when it is published. It is important to realize, though, that strictly speaking the *Handbook* is not an SMA project. The book predates the SMA, and although a large number of individuals who eventually became SMA members contributed to it, the book will not be the voice of the SMA. A percentage of profits from it will be donated to the SMA, and it will be in the best interest of the SMA to endorse and promote the book, but it will not be the SMA's book. This became abundantly necessary over the past year as we have been working to help the SMA achieve tax-exempt status as a non-profit organization. [See article in this Journal, "The Taxman Cometh."]

**Second Wave: To conduct and support research and educational activities on surfing and health.**

Other than the implicit encouragement felt by all SMA members to get out and do 'something,' there isn't an identifi-



Locked in with the SMA. Photo by John Small

able project in regard to this goal. As the SMA, we conducted the North Shore clinics in October, 1987; Kevin and I did the North Coast Marijuana Sputum Cytology Study; and, Alex Kaliakin has been the SMA (with other SMA members) at many Southern California surf contests.

In Australia, I don't know. My impression is that there haven't been SMA projects per se in Australia. Brian Lowdon conducts his own surf-related health research (which the SMA thoroughly encourages, but is not really part of); and Jim Bradley does heaps of surf-health education, but all generally through the SLSA - not the SMA. Finding ways to better involve the SMA in Australia members' individual projects, and developing SMA-based projects in Australia would be a good subject for a brainstorming session.

### **Third Wave: To represent the sport of surfing in the fields of medicine and science.**

We have succeeded in this matter completely; there are no other surf medicine or surf science related organizations. We're it; and when matters pertaining to surfing arise, we're called upon. Unfortunately, the majority of non-surfing health professionals don't know of our existence. The articles I published in "Physician and Sports Medicine" made some headway, but this is a job still to be done. For every member who has a link with a medical or scientific publication, take it upon yourselves to write and publish something about the SMA - even if only to announce its existence and to publicize upcoming meetings.

As individuals, whenever we have a publication (surfing-related or not), list your membership in the SMA as part of your academic and scientific background. Be proud of it.

### **Fourth Wave: To teach physicians about the unique health problems of surfers, and how to better care for surfers.**

We've barely cracked the surface on this one. For instance, most physicians here in the U.S. have never heard of Surfer's Ear. I developed a slide show on the "Medical Aspects of Surfing" for all members to use [one copy at SMA headquarters, another copy in Southern

California c/o Dan Dworsky, M.D., (619) 268-9500, and one copy in Australia c/o Geoff Booth, M.B., (49) 63 3445. Many members up here have used it, for instance as a Grand Rounds at their hospital, and been totally stoked. It's a great way to help us achieve this 4th goal. Give it a try.

### **Fifth Wave: To create a network of barefoot doctors and surfing health professionals around-the-world.**



*Off the labia. Photo by John Small*

This goal sums up the SMA, this is what we've accomplished: a network. A year ago I would have thought that every surfing health professional had heard of us, and if they hadn't made contact with us it was because they weren't into an 'organization' - but week after week we get many letters from people who have just heard of us (everyone doesn't read *Surfer* magazine). So, we're up to about four hundred dues-paying members - with Australians accounting for less than 10% [as of July 1990, it is about 5% of 600 members] of the membership. This should be a topic for discussion at the Bluff meetings.

How many surfing health professionals in Australia (and New Zealand) have we not yet reached, and how will they be reached? And what kind of members do we want? As we've expressed in "Surfing Medicine", we'd go broke if we suddenly received one hundred Barefoot Doctor memberships from Australia, at \$15/year - it costs almost that much to just mail the two journals a year to an Australian member, much less cover the cost of developing and printing it. Any ideas for a way around that? So far, we've had a delightfully high percentage (#6 total) of

Australian Life Members (\$250 each), which has helped offset the cost-burden of Australian Barefoot Doctors.

With not very many mailings of the journal, though, the Australian Life Membership proves to be a real deal for the member, and something of a burden for the SMA. However, most Life Members' generosity towards the SMA has proven to be sustained - with Life Members not infrequently sending in out-of-the-blue donations (what, YOU haven't? You cheapskate!) or donating resources to the SMA (for instance, the Santa Cruz party(ies) Rym and Bob Chatfield put on in the fall of 1988, with lots of grocery and entertainment expenses donated).

Putting on a regional SMA activity, which is really more or less what this Bluff conference is—despite it being "international"—is the best way to generate and strengthen the SMA network in a given area. For instance, we held two Northern California SMA meetings in the fall of 1988. The first was the aforementioned Santa Cruz party, which was, in effect, a membership drive - a very successful one (about \$1500 in memberships).

And it was at that party that it was announced that in the month following there would be an SMA surf-trip/adventure/conference to Big Flat (a remote area in Northern California) - and all twenty slots for that conference were practically gobbled up at that time. A nice one-two punch. And out of the Big Flat trip developed a number of SMA and surfing related projects that came about just out of the sheer fact of our spending that time together, of associating with each other. That's the SMA way. Maybe talk about using this strategy more in Australia, choosing a central surf-area (Sydney-area?) to hold an SMA party - and to plan (or announce) the next SMA-Australia conference.

And, realize too, that SMA conferences have always been one of the chief generators of funds for the organization. It is perfectly reasonable to price the conference at about 20 to 25% over the actual expenses, usually by charging a conference fee, and to let that money cover whatever unforeseen expenses develop (of which there are many, not to mention the actual costs) and to put the rest into the SMA coffers. This is how all professional medical education conferences operate - many universities depend on income from their continuing education programs.

**Sixth Wave: To protect and preserve the surfers' natural environment: the waves, the ocean, and our beaches.**

This is largely the domain of the Surfrider Foundation, and in many ways we've only ridden on their coattails on this one. When they've asked for help or consultation, we've happily given it. What activities in this area are going on in Australia, and how can the SMA help? Consulting on health conditions in a surf spot should be more of an SMA activity. For instance, for years I've heard about the problems of surfers shitting all over the place at Cactus in Southern Australia and where you are right now, the Bluff. What input can we have on that (other

than contributing to the fecal load ourselves). Perhaps build appropriate outhouses and find a scheme to maintain them? In a similar vein, we have been asked to consult on developing a surf clinic for surf camps (i.e., Grajagan) - but this is still in the developmental stage. [See Upcoming Conferences!]

[More recently though, and as is reflected in this issue of the Journal, there has been an emphasis in the SMA on teaching ourselves more about ecological issues, particularly as relates to surfing.]

**Summary**

I've touched on a number of questions in trying to provide an over-

view of where I see the SMA in terms of its stated goals. SMA conferences, like the one you're at now at the Bluff, are the perfect time to brainstorm on such questions - whether in formal seminars around the fire at night, or out in the water. Talk it up, someone be responsible for gathering together everyone's thoughts and let's hear from you!

Finally, and I hope it goes without saying, ride one for me, mates - I really miss it."

Mark da' Shark  
6-19-89  
[updated, 7-7-90]

# THE SMA IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA JUNE 24 - JULY 8, 1989, THE BLUFF (GNARALOO) CONFERENCE

by Geoff Booth, M.B., Newcastle, Australia



*Editor: the past year has not been kind to Dr. Geoff. First he trashed the cartilage in his knee, then hobbled Outback to Western Oz where he played jeep El Rollo whilst being preyed upon by Man-eating SMA wankers, and finally, on December 28th, the Newcastle earthquake destroyed his office building. Yet, the journalist in him survives - and he prepared this report for the SMA (which also appeared in Tracks).*

**PROLOGUE**

Humpbacked whales getting air, Toyota trucks spiralling in the air, mateship beyond the call of duty, stuck in the desert with sheared wheel nuts, mega distance travelling, scorpions, mystical aboriginal dreamtime symbolism, fireside jokes and laughter, healthy jingoism, medical, scientific and environmental brain food, and importantly, good waves. These elements best sum up the 2 weeks of Indiana Jones type adventures encountered by members of the SMA at their 4th annual Scientific Conference held in the Gascoyne "Desert-Coast" of Western Australia.

Dean Forsyth and his band of merry

men and women (WEST COAST SURFARIS) were hosts to this first Australian conference—the previous three from 1986 onwards being held at Tavarua surf island, Fiji. Without Dean's phlegmati-

cally Australian approach and the amazing loyalty shown by his crew, this conference could easily have ended in disaster. Instead it was a rip roaring success.



*Dr. Geoff in the remains of his office after the Dec. 28th Newcastle earthquake. Photo by Booth*

## CHAPTER I

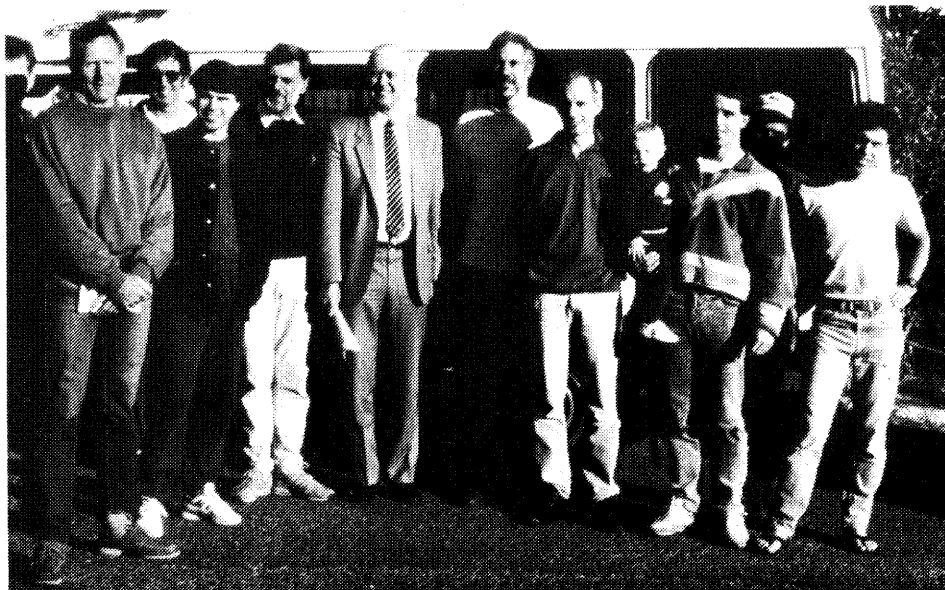
Leaving Sydney on Friday the 23rd of June (the 1st day of a large easterly swell that had finally appeared after a long wave drought on the East Coast of Australia), Mr. Ansett smoothly conveyed his precious cargo (I'm talking surfboards) to Perth.

West Coast Surfari's, Dean Forsyth, was at the baggage check ready to convey us to the Sands Motor Inn for an overnight stop at that famed wave center of Perth, Scarborough (in preparation for the 14 to 18 hour trek north to Gascoyne country the following day).

Big wave war stories, scorpions with death stings, floods, starvation and cranking barrels were some of the anecdotes swapped by the charged-up group of dedicated surf docs that evening.

Members of the SMA group were Simon Leslie (surf doc from Wollongong) together with his wife Margaret and children Brendon and David, Jim Bradley O.A. (Mr. School Surfing), Rick Lucas (Sydney surf doc), John Jorgenson (another Wollongong surf doc and owner of the grossest slide ever shown at an S.M.A. conference), John Buttsworth (surfing psychiatrist and veteran goat-boater), Brian Lowdon (co-author of *Competitive Surfing; A Dedicated Approach*), two seppo's—Paul Manchester, a surf doc from California, and Steve Shapiro, a young Californian about to start med school in Kentucky! John Small, an ex-seppo and respected surf photographer from Western Australia (as well as nurse from one of Perth's major city hospitals), Rick Gath, well known Margaret River hell man and designer/inventor of the GATH HAT, and finally myself, Dr. Geoff together with my two children, Christian and Charles.

Dean Forsyth's hand-picked West Coast Surfari crew were: Bill Gibson, 2nd in charge, "Ocean Express" editor and barrel king (both ocean and land) later to prove to us that W.A. resilience is a real phenomena. Lindsay Thompson, Margaret River organizer, wheel nut king and hot barrel finder himself. Mark "Bunger" Clift, dishwasher, raconteur and back hand barrel boy. Dean's wife Kay and their two children (Dane and Reneé) provided motherly comfort and kindness. Kay Gibson, Bill's hard working wife, provided all the food that we could eat (which was a huge amount) whilst their children Bree and Hamish provided friendship for the S.M.A. members' kids.



*Western Australia Minister of Health, Mr. Keith Wilson, welcomes the SMA.  
Photo by Booth*

Adam, Lindsay's son, managed to keep the kids on tract and provided raging sounds for the 4WD trips. (I appreciated your musical taste, Adam).

We were also honoured to have as Senior Journalist and groomed home boy guest Jeremy Hart, a freelance pommie writer and boss of that widely quoted (amongst hamster-lovers and surfers) magazine, Gentleman's Quarterly or G-Q to those in the know. (FAR-QUE to the real officianado's).

Saturday dawned sunny and cold with a 3+ swell closing out on Scarborough's famous (Bond) designer beach strip. You could tell there was big surf up North. The Margaret River underground was whispering big swells. Mark Gillette (surf doc from Wollongong) arrived with his wife-person Heidi, just having completed another honeymoon in the barrels of Margaret River. The crew was now complete and we were itching for action.

The Honorable Mr. Keith Wilson, Western Australia's Minister for Health, presided over the formal opening ceremony of this 4th annual scientific conference of the S.M.A. held at the Sands Motel. As Minister for Health he seemed very tuned in to surfing and its various health related matters. I secretly reflected on how unlikely it would have been for any of the Eastern States Health Ministers to come along at 8:00 a.m. on a Saturday morning to meet a group of surf docs and participate in the opening ceremony. Chalk another big one up on the slate to W.A.

The group was divided into two. One coached up to Carnarvon and the other trucked up in Dean's luxury Toyota.

Bad-Billy picked up the coach crew in Carnarvon's quiet, darkened streets at about 10:00 p.m. that night and off into the dark we slashed. The mighty Gascoyne River had just started to recede after a major flood the previous week. What a sight, to see water actually flowing in this huge but usually dry, sandy river.

The next 2 hours were in Bill's capable formula one hands as we ripped along Sand Highway 101 past the huge sign reminding all that 'KING WAVE SKILL'. A few slides, a sand dune 4 W.D. crash stop (to avoid one of those pesky gates that just seem to suddenly grow after desert rain) and we were at base camp No. 1 smack bang on the Gascoyne Coast on the Tropic of Capricorn.

About 3:00 a.m. the rest of the crew arrived. The only damage sustained being a bruised surfboard bag (after it came off one of the trucks).

## CHAPTER II

Sunday morning revealed 6 foot waves and an icy cold off-shore wind with a mind numbing chill factor. All of us were amped ready to kill and off we sped to Centre Peak / Tombstones. Sharp limestone cliffs, huge sea urchins just itching to penetrate soft flesh, long paddles, hollow long left-hand walls, turtles, dolphins and a few sharks helped tune us up. Dean Bunger showed us their

stuff. The crew quickly followed suit. The waves at Tombstones were similar to Buggery (N.S.W.) although Tombstones rides were much longer.

Over lunch, Jim Bradley O.A., the kahuna of school surfing in Australia, and recent Surfing Hall of Fame inductee, welcomed us as conference participants. This historic conference was Jim's idea spawned in his fertile mind some 2 years ago whilst visiting Tavarua. Due to his organisational abilities and perseverance and the far sighted attitude of Dean Forsyth and his West Coast Surfari's crew, here we were, some 26 persons in a remote area of this pristine Western Australia Coast some 2+ hours from Carnarvon under a huge marquee surrounded by satellite tents. Three 4 W.D.'s, a rubber duckie (Zodiac), surfboards, and fishing gear were our technical toys. The boom crash of real surf on the limestone reefs provided the necessary fuel. A feast was happening.

Following short introductions from conference participants, Dr. Geoff presented a slide show outlining the history of the S.M.A. Commencing in 1986 as the brain child of Mark Renneker (surf doc from San Francisco), covering its gestation in the tubes of Tavarua, Fiji in September, 1986, (with further conferences in 1987 and 1988), membership drives and an up and running DEAR SURF DOC'S column in *Surfer* magazine being just one of the highlights. Slides of the Nabila Village (Fiji) water project grand opening were shown to illustrate ways in which the S.M.A. has been able to

link in with indigenous people living in overseas surf zones.

### CHAPTER III

Next morning a freezing cold dawn patrol travelled to Turtles. Scenery on the way was awesome. Sheer limestone cliffs with lots of bays and off-shore reefs where exciting freight train lefts were peeling off. Our 4 W.D. sped over the lunar like scape and finally tracked up some giant dunes to reveal the sea of (non) tranquility below. 5 foot lefts peeling through. Warm water but freezing off-shore winds meant that those who'd brought plenty of rubber were laughing.

During that session we met Phil and Sue Ogden (caretakers of "CAMP OF THE MOON"). Phil told us there'd been only one big swell so far although another was expected soon. Bill and Mark Clift, our drivers for the day led the way by pulling into heaps of barrels and occasionally coming out. What a session.

On the way back all the reefs were cranking with SMEARS particularly impressive.

The first major seminar was held after lunch and fittingly enough was on surf helmets. Jim Bradley and Rick Gath were the presenters.

Jim Bradley's RAD HAT needed little introduction. From a humble beginning "Rad Hats" have been seen on the craniums of the world's greatest surfers, protecting their delicate frontal lobes from Pipeline's railroad spikes and Garagan

staghorns. Tom Carrol in particular has tackled some horrendous beastly left hand pits with his skull lovingly enveloped in Jim's protective creations.

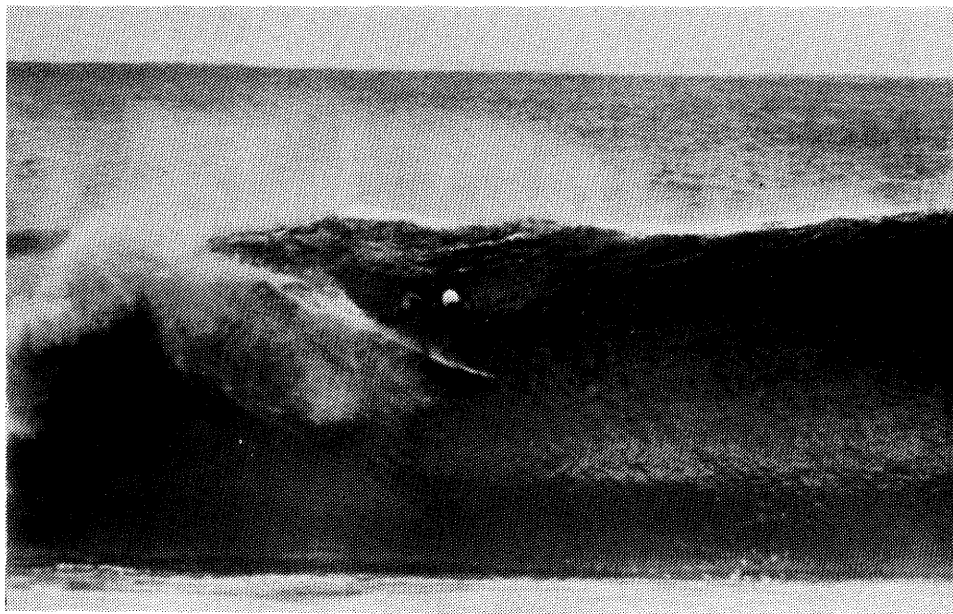
Meanwhile, for the past 2-1/2 years, Western Australia's Rick Gath has been quietly researching and developing his own creation (GATH HATS) in the unforgiving waves of Margaret River. To date very few surfers would have seen Rick's creations, similar to a motorcycle helmet in shape with a full frontal tinted plastic protective visor. They look very futuristic, keep the head warm, the skull protected, and also protect the face (skin and eyes) from glare, wind and U.V.R. Impact absorption and penetration resistance have yet to be tested at Pipeline/Bondi but believe me these helmets feel great.

What with Jim's "Rad Hats" and Rick's "Gath Hats", Australia sure leads the field in head protection for surfers. (For information Jim Bradley can be contacted at P.O. Box 131, Warilla. 2528. N.S.W.; Rick Gath can be contacted at Future Sports Pty. Ltd., P.O. Box 56, Margaret River, W.A. 6285).

After lunch the S.M.A. crew presented Jim Bradley with a "SIR JIM" sweat shirt (in acknowledgement of his O.A. for services to surfing) as well as a wetsuit (for services to the S.M.A. conference).

A late afternoon session at Turtles proved a stimulus to the local sea life. Just on sunset, mega-sized humpbacked whales were seen far out to sea, performing some of the most radical aerials ever.

That evening a conference session addressing the question of how to work out a judging system for disabled surfers was hosted by Dr. Geoff. Just how can you judge a person who is barely able to paddle a board because of, say, paralysis of an arm? Or a person whose balance is off because of an artificial leg? Conference participants agreed that courage was something that all disabled surfers had heaps of. However, we couldn't come with an objective measuring system of scoring "added value" which accurately reflected the underlying severity of that rider's disability. That challenge remains to some fertile mind out there in TRACKS LAND. (A year's free subscription to *Tracks* for someone who can invent a suitable scoring system).



Rick Gath with his Gath Hat (1989 model); the 1990 models have no face shields.  
Photo by John Small



## CHAPTER IV

The next day, a truly outstanding early morning session at Turtles went down. Stand up tubes were possible in those amazing waves. The crew were in good spirits for the lunchtime conference session.

Paul Manchester, a surf doc from Santa Cruz, California, who'd recently completed his training in occupational medicine didn't let us down. He presented one of the most thoroughly researched papers ever at an S.M.A. conference, entitled "EFFECTS OF WATER POLLUTION IN SANTA MONICA BAY". Paul gave us an inkling into the future scenario for Australian beaches should we continue to blindly follow the crap-trail that's been handed out to residents of Santa Monica Bay (Los Angeles).

Types of contaminants that Californian surfers contend with include debris, heavy metals, organic and inorganic compounds, radio-activity, various biological substances (bacteria, viruses and fungi) as well as turbidity and heated water (from industrial outfall, including nuclear plants).

An interesting type of pollution that this area receives comes from aviation fuel dumped by planes circling Los Angeles airport. No doubt Sydney-siders suffer similar contamination from planes circling Mascot.

Ecosystem as well as human system effects were discussed in Paul's far ranging paper. The telling bottom line was expressed in terms of risk of developing cancer over a 70 year lifespan. According to Paul's estimates there was a 1 in a 1,000,000 chance of developing cancer due to recreational exposure from polluted water and a 1 in a 100,000 chance of developing cancer due to eating the equivalent of 1 fish meal per month from these polluted waters.

However frightening these figures maybe, compare them to the lifestyle risks of a 1 in 10 chance of developing cancer because of smoking a packet of cigarettes per day and the 1 in 100 chance of developing cancer via exposure to side-stream cigarette smoke, light to moderate alcohol intake or frequent airline trips!! Food for thought, eh. Paul agreed that the risk of developing various infections, however, is much higher than that of developing cancer. How high is a matter for further studies.

Sean Murphy, *Tracks* esteemed



*Seminars were held in a tent. Simon Leslie presiding. Photo by John Small*

Western Australian correspondent, journalist for the Carnarvon Times and The Western Australian, and Channel 10 news champ, pulled off some excellent reporting during this trip. His cameras caught some wound incision action as John Jorgenson drained a pusy blister from John Buttsworth's battle scarred hands. The T.V. cameras just loved the close-ups as scalpel blades slashed through the pus. Robert Englund eat your heart out!

Another enjoyable afternoon session with 6 foot sets at Turtles saw the crew in a very mellow mood especially after a scintillating cricket summary direct from THE OVAL courtesy of Jim Bradley.

Back at camp the Channel 7 crew had arrived from Perth for a serious in-depth investigative look at the S.M.A.

That evening Brian Lowdon presented a chronology of ocean pollution on that infamous Black Rock sewage disposal works, courtesy Geelong District Water Board.

Brian outlined how surfers had been effected by this public health outrage. For example, in March 1987 half the students at a school surfing programme held at Bancoora Beach were admitted to the hospital suffering gastroenteritis.

In February 1988, local schools began a science project measuring bacteria counts in the water. Their findings were 4,000 to 8,000 E coli per 100 ml. or some 10 times higher than "acceptable limits." Local surfers responded to this by forming political lobby groups including

SANE (Surfers Appreciation of Natural Environment) and Sewage Surf Riders (ex-13th beach boardriders). Brian's talk highlighted the point that unless we as surfers start to organise ourselves into a powerful lobby force, pollution of the ocean is going to continue unabated. We, together with fisherman, are at the cutting edge of ocean awareness. Unless we use this awareness to mobilize the general community, surfing, particularly in urban areas, will become of historical value only.

Jim Bradley presents the second session entitled "Pre-high school surf safety education." With high school kids having benefited via the school surfing programme, it's now the primary school kids' turn to get into surfing as part of their curriculum development. School kids aged 6 to 12 years of age are the target groups for the above national surf safety package. Three levels of expertise are to be taught:

Level 1: a passive audio-visual presentation;

Level 2: incorporating a visit to the beach together with practical skills of wading, diving through and catching waves in waist deep water.

Level 3: have the kids swim out of their depth through the wave zone.

These programmes will be introduced during summer of '89. An up and coming group of wave slashers no doubt are about to be unleashed with the limits of surfing being pushed even further. Question: "Will the dinosaur die?"



Paul Manchester at Gnaraloo. Photo by John Small

## CHAPTER V

Wednesday 28th was a strange day. The swell dropped but still a few waves pushed through at Turtles. A late evening front howled through.

Conference sessions during the day and evening included Mark Gillette's follow-up of the Illawarra Health Area Surfboard Rider's Injury Study, Steve Shapiro's "Operation Wipeout" and John Jorgenson's all time classic "Facial Trauma."

Mark Gillette, a surf doc from the South Coast and occasional surf doc journo provided a follow-up to the original 1985 Illawarra surfing study.

The up-date study revealed that:

1. Surfing injuries are infrequent.
2. Most injuries occur in small (less than 1.8 metre) surf.
3. 66% of injuries occur due to the surfer being struck by his/her own board; the fin accounting for 50%, nose 16% and rail 11% of "own surfboard" injuries.
4. The head is the most common regional injury site (50% of all injuries).

Following discussions, conference participants formulated the following recommendations:

1. Further surfboard safety development particularly in relation to fins and nose should continue. The S.M.A. is prepared to work with interested and relevant parties in terms of providing appropriate

medical input.

2. All surfers should learn correct wipeout techniques. A.S.A. Surfcoaches and School Surfing Programmes are available to give input in these areas.

It is also quite clear from the above figures that serious thought should be given by all surfers to wearing suitable surfing helmets.

Steve Shapiro, a young Californian, presented a thought provoking video on neck injuries entitled "PROJECT WIPEOUT." Parts of California (particularly in the Newport area) have an extraordinarily high incidence of neck injuries caused by surfers diving through waves or being slam dunked neck first onto shallow sand bars.

As S.M.A. conferees, we certainly recognised the absolute importance of preventing surf related neck injuries and wholeheartedly supported any programmes which could effectively prevent the incidence of surf related neck trauma.

Steve Shapiro consolidated his defacto Aussie award by his unbelievably impressive approaches to surfing. Being a small, light guy (around 120 lbs.) he'd custom shaped his Maun Poon boards in his mom's beach house. A 7'6" 2" thick twin fin and a 6'11", 1" thick 6-finned multi-railed hook back, glassless special were but two of his surfboard quivers.

Steve also made famous the following statement "THE 'A' WAS BELIEVABLE." This comment arose from an incident high on the wind swept cliffs of Dolphin Point where Jim Bradley and myself introduced Steve to some ageless, priceless, "signed by the artist," K-TEL aboriginal stone paintings.

Over the years, the S.M.A. conferences have produced some absolutely gross (even by medical standards) slides. However, John Jorgenson (a surgical trainee) had a slide showing a shot gun wound to the face that was truly better than Texas Chain Saw Massacre stills. This slide was used by John to bring our attention meters to the 220% level. It worked.

John highlighted the importance of anatomical knowledge as well as thorough wound cleansing and exploration techniques when dealing with facial injuries. Apart from such obvious structures as the eye, emphasis was placed on the tear duct (lacrimal duct) at the inner corner of the eye, the facial nerve (within the soft parotid gland at the angle of the jaw) and the parotid duct. Dental injuries were mentioned. We were also reminded of blow-out fractures of the orbit in which the floor of the eye socket fractures and momentarily pops open like a trap-door to catch parts of the eye (fat pad and eye muscles). If missed, such injuries cause major visual problems in the form of double vision. If recognised and treated early, complications are far less common.

John's slides had the crew primed and ready for anything; unbeknownst to them, "anything" was about to happen.

## CHAPTER VI

Thursday, 29th June and surf's up. Tombstones and Centre Peak with occasional 9 foot sets. The crew went berko. Tubes and wipeouts aplenty. A few memorable waves stood out. However, John Small's horrendous wipeout in which he left his drop too late, stood up and free fell down a double overhead wave just as tons of spray and spit from the tube absolutely drilled him. Front page photo material. I bet John was wishing he'd been taking photos rather than surfing.

After lunch we loaded up and headed for "CAMP OF THE MOON" (the "Bluff") and a rendezvous with fate. Those long hollow lefts were absolutely pumping. When we first checked the point from the camping area the sets looked huge — some in the 10-12 foot range. However once out they were only in the 6-9 foot range. It's the first time I've ever seen a surf spot bigger from the beach than it actually was.



*John Buttsworth wave-skiing the Bluff. Photo by John Small*

The jump-off from the small keyhole in the rock shelf was an exercise in timing. Sea urchins the size of footballs either side of the keyhole were just waiting to get you on the way back in if they missed you on the way out.

Some memorable waves were had that afternoon. Bill Gibson's high and dry tube followed by a bowl wipeout was only just pipped by Bunker's double tube. My brand new M.R. 7'2" was really enjoying its newfound freedom. John Buttsworth was the first goat-boater to legitimately surf this legendary wave. He got out via the keyhole but wisely paddled the 1k. or so back to the beach.

The locals were ripping. Phil Ogdon was obviously enjoying himself and no doubt was stoking up for the big S.M.A. travelling surf-doc show to be held at his famous eating place that evening.

Tired but elated we made our way back in, anticipating a nice warm shower from the back of Dean's \$75,000 Toyota Deluxe Cruiser 4 W.D. Coach. I'd just started to walk up towards the cliff to get a "sunset" shot when I looked around to see the 4 W.D. inexorably gathering momentum towards the limestone cliff edge. 2 or perhaps 3 of the crew were futilely trying to hang onto the bumper bar to stop the 3 ton vehicle's motion. Dean was still on the roof where he'd been tying on our surfboards.

I screamed to Dean to jump which he did a split second before the vehicle flipped over the cliff. A millisecond before Dean jumped off, Billy jumped into the driver's seat to try and hit the brakes. He hit the brakes but by then the front

wheels were over. The car flipped in mid air and disappeared 15' down to the rocks/sand below.

We rushed to the edge. Amazingly the vehicle had landed on its wheels. However, Bill was lying flat on his back between the cliff and the truck. He looked bad.

The S.M.A. surf docs flew into medical mode. The emergency kit was resurrected from the truck. A quick examination revealed Bill to be alive and conscious but with abdominal and back/pelvis injuries. An I.V. was inserted, a wire bed frame covered with board covers was used as a stretcher and with John G. as surgeon and Simon L. as physician, Lindsay's truck was used as an ambulance to take the injured Bill over the rough roads to Carnarvon Hospital.

20 or so volunteers acted as human jacks and pushed one side of Dean's truck while a pile of crushed boards were



*Dean's truck — after! Photo by Booth*

removed. No surgery was going to be able to fix my 2 beautiful M.R. boards — totalled courtesy of a 3 ton chassis and spike rock sandwich crush. Brian Lowdon's 2 boards fared little better. A few other boards suffered railroad spike-deck through bottom dings.

Dean was able to start up his vehicle and drive it off the sandy beach beating a fickle incoming tide and a few soft sand traps. Despite a few damaged panels the coach was completely driveable and without any obvious major structural damage. Oh what a feeling!

Channel 9 T.V. news crew were on hand to get a scoop beyond any T.V. reporter's wildest dreams.

The "Ask the Surf Docs" night at Phil's restaurant was cancelled. Everyone was stunned as we made our way back to camp later that evening.

John Buttsworth wisely arranged a meeting to allow thoughts and feelings to be aired. There was a lot of apprehension and tension in the air.

Early that morning the surgical surf docs returned to camp letting us know that Bill had survived. X-rays had not revealed any fractures. He was in discomfort but mobile and in (relatively) good spirits in the loving arms of Matron X.

## CHAPTER VII

Surf that day was small and windy in the 3-5 foot range. Unfortunately, our beloved leader, Jim Bradley had to leave. His presence had helped to get the conference going and weld participants into a coherent team. He was sadly missed.

Conference sessions that day were Brian Lowdon's "Cardiac Response of Recreational Surfers" and John

Buttsworth's "Surfers Personality and Aggression."

Brian Lowdon presented the results of a study by one of the Deakin University researchers, Rudi Meir. Rudi had investigated heart rate response in 6 recreational surfers. The major conclusion, presented by Brian, was "recreational surfing requires an amount of energy equivalent to playing squash or undertaking a cross-country ski." Figures for surfing were 33.6 kJ. per minute or 2016 kJ per hour. Paddling accounted for the greatest percentage of energy (44%) and wave riding accounted for only 5%. Heart rates were at the level of a "heavy workout."

So surfing, if undertaken 4 or more times per week, is most certainly an activity which promotes fitness. There you are kids, you can now argue with your parents, teachers, friends etc. that you are only surfing to keep fit and get healthy, not because you enjoy it!

John Buttsworth, a 6th generation Australian, goat-boat rider of 12 years (starting in his early 30s but nonetheless coming 4th in the National Titles held at Margaret River), first goat-boater to properly surf Camp Of The Moon, Australian antique furniture expert, psychiatrist and all-round good guy presented a short but very stimulating session on aggression.

Unfortunately, John's hands were by now completely useless for paddling. His left wrist was puffed up and exhibited classical signs of tenosynovitis including the loudest tendon crackling (crepitus) you've ever heard. As it was not going to be possible for him to surf for at least a few weeks, he decided to head back to Sydney. This session was his 1989 S.M.A. Conference swansong. We sat enraptured as John explained the difference between assertiveness and aggression and also pointed out the two major forms of aggression (benign and malignant).

His discussions regarding territorial aggression seemed typical of many crowded areas of the surfing world including parts of Australia, Hawaii, California, East Coast U.S.A. and South America. John also pointed out the various personality profiles exhibited by surfers. In particular he felt that disinhibited behaviour so often manifest in surfers is in fact emotionally healthy. The hallmarks include rebellion, confidence, exuberance, risk taking and living for the here and now. Perhaps not comforting thoughts for some members of our group but no doubt words of wisdom for the



*Dr. Geoff and aboriginal friends. Photo by John Small*

world's surf dads and mums.

Older readers will no doubt remember Dr. Geoff's article entitled "On Aggression" written some 10 years ago (Tracks, August 1979, page 29). John's presentation substantially enlarged and updated this.

## CHAPTER VIII

Saturday, 1st July dawned with a sad farewell to John. Happiness in the form of 4 foot sets at Tombstones and one surfer less, however, helped to relieve the sorrow.

Visitors from Carnarvon Aboriginal Medical Centre (Dr. Bronwyn, Karen, Catherine and Marilyn) presented for a lunchtime chat. Great interest was shown in their expose of issues, problems and methods of coping with indigenous medical concerns. The Carnarvon Aboriginal Medical Service was the idea of local aborigines some 10 years ago. The service itself had been up and running for the past 3 years and employees include 2 medical officers, 6 aboriginal health workers, 1 clinic sister and administrative staff. All staff were answerable to the Carnarvon Area Aboriginal Committee. This service covered an area bounded within a radius of 500 km. from Carnarvon. Within this area there were 2,200 registered aborigines. They represented a spectrum of "urban" to "traditional." However all aborigines in the Carnarvon area were noted to be extremely traditionally orientated in their thinking.

Respect, access and acceptability were the philosophical foundations on which this medical service was based. Regaining a sense of control in terms of land, housing and spirituality were seen as central constructs to good aboriginal health.

Diabetes, hypertension, iron and folate deficiency anaemia, as well as high "aged" mortality, were the major identified medical issues. S.M.A. members were more than impressed by the sensitivity, sincerity and involvement of these representatives who graciously visited our camp.

Another spiritually uplifting experience occurred this day; Bill came back to camp. What a man. Bruised, battered, abraded, limping and with quite a swollen abdomen, Bill re-entered camp to the amazement and cheers of our group.

Evening waves at Tombstones in the 3'-4' range were enjoyed by a few of the faithful.

Karl (an expert pastrycook from Scarborough) and Mark (an ex-Queenland surf shop rep) arrived fresh from Perth later that day to help swell the camp's depleted ranks. It was once again a "full house".

Simon Leslie presented the evening's session entitled "Ozone Layer, U.V.R. and Skin Cancer."

A telling series of slides entertained docs, fellow campers and yet another T.V. crew (Channel 7 again but with a different agenda) emphasising the critical importance to surfers of the ozone shield and the way in which it protects against the harmful effects of excessive U.V.R. (ultraviolet rays).

Following Simon's presentations, the camp crew were more than entertained by one or two (hundred) T.V. takes by the iron lady of Channel 7, Jenny-Ann. She insisted that everything be right for her programme. The following day was destined to provide even more stunning T.V. takes for those fortunate conferees who volunteered to walk along the camp cliff.

## CHAPTER IX

Sunday, 2nd July was surf exploration day. Dean captained the Zodiac and explored uncharted reefs north of our camp.

Lindsay captained the 4 W.D. so some of us could travel south. Dolphin Point looked great from the beach. 15 minutes of paddling later revealed hollow lefts breaking onto 6-12 inches of gnarly reef. We scored a few waves before the winds really howled. No deaths or injury but at the same time no real quality tubes this time.

Captain Dean and the Zodiac warriors fared little better. The wind was too strong and the only excitement came when a big wave nearly capsized the boat. Fortunately, only one passenger was lost overboard so it wasn't really a big deal (1 out of 7 is a small price for these type of trips).



ZODIAK excitement.  
Photo by John Small

Small waves at Wankers just in front of camp provided lunchtime and early afternoon wave relief. Paul, the camp manager, was consistently getting covered in these enjoyable lefts. Station owners Max and his wife Louise together with one of the Carnarvon docs (Dr. Hector Fernandez) came down to our lunchtime meeting.

A surfing physiotherapist, John McTaggart, spoke on "Surfer's Backs." He advocated a careful detailed approach to back examination with emphasis being on gentle mobilisation techniques and McKenzie "extension" exercises. As well as being an excellent surfer, John also plays a mean game of Aussie Rules football. This was his last surf session in Australia before heading west into the

Indian and Atlantic Ocean surf zones.

A late afternoon fishing expedition snagged a huge Long Tom. My kids, Christian and Charles, were stoked and a couple more fishermen were henceforth born.

Rick Lucas, M.D., a Sydney surf doc doing studies into tropical/infectious diseases presented an evening with Hepatitis B.

Rick pointed out that Hepatitis B currently kills more people worldwide in a day than AIDS kills in a year. The Hepatitis B virus is 100-1,000 times more infectious than AIDS and there are about 200,000,000 people worldwide who are carriers (250,000 in Australia). Hepatitis B virus is capable of living outside the host's body for long periods of time and is carried in all body fluids (tears, blood, sweat, semen, vaginal fluids, etc.). Unfortunately, the incidence of this disease in Australia is growing: in 1978 6.9 persons per 100,000 were infected; whereas, in 1985 the incidence had grown to 11.5 per 100,000.

Fortunately, production of the recombinant D.N.A. Hepatitis B vaccine now gives us a chance to safely minimise the effects of this virus.

Surfers, especially those travelling to high risk areas such as South America, parts of Asia, etc., should seriously consider getting their Hep. B shots. There is also a growing risk for city-based surfers in picking up Hep. B by stepping on contaminated needles: a very real risk in areas such as Sydney, Newcastle, Wollongong and the Gold Coast.

## CHAPTER X

Monday, 3rd June was surf exploration day. No surf was found. However, an enforced culturally enriching day was spent in and around our broken down 4 W.D. in the middle of the desert. 4 of the 6 nuts had sheared off the back wheel of Dean's ill-fated coach. Let us just say that externally induced concentration meltdown occurred whilst 1, or perhaps 2, of the crew were "tightening" nuts after a nocturnal wheel change.

I learned there's no N.R.M.A. (or W.A. motoring association equivalent) in this remote region. Also, Rick and I decided, following in-depth discussions during the day, we wouldn't risk venture capital in a McDonald's Restaurant in the area. We reasoned the occupants of the 6 cars that drove through in the 7 hours we

were stranded wouldn't be able to afford the (estimated) \$250 per burger we'd have to charge to cover development costs. We did figure, however, that we'd be able to doctor the figures and get a loan from some of the famous W.A. finance houses. With a development application into Council, we'd be able to sell to the first Japanese tourist promoter we could con. Life in the desert sure is fertile breeding ground for bright ideas and corruption!

That evening an around the fire Maun Poon baiting session was enjoyed by all — even Maun Poon.



Fire sessions. The classic surf trip night activity. Photo by John Small

## CHAPTER XI

Tuesday, 4th July proved an enlightening day. A lunchtime visit from some of the Carnarvon area aboriginal elders gave us first hand insight into local aboriginal feeling and culture. Daisy and Don were particularly erudite in their expressions of aboriginal identity. Stan and Ernie, a couple of the station hands, came down from their camp to "see the docs." These visits provided us with an enriching experience and proved once again there is more than enough culture and wisdom to be found inside Australia without having to travel elsewhere.

Later that afternoon a small group of S.M.A. delegates headed south to "Camp of the Moon." Having been clued in by Don (who although not a coastal dweller seemed to have a 6th sense as far as weather conditions were concerned) I took my board. Simon Leslie was the only other surfer who agreed with the idea. Other members looked at us skeptically until we came over the sandhills and checked the point. Late that evening Simon and I reaped the rewards of listening to wise counsel as we surfed till

after sunset in those hollow 3' tubes.

Phil and Sue Ogdon were our gracious hosts. After attending to our appetites via their famous "Bluff Burgers" washed down by nutritious smoothies, it was time for some healing and education sessions.

A tetanus shot or two, digging a moth out of a camper's ear, some entertainment, slides and health advice in a Q & A form from Drs. Simon, Rick, John & Geoff rounded out a good day at this sacred site.

## CHAPTER XII

Wednesday dawned cold and small. Dawn patrol to cross-chop Turtles. Apres lunch at small Wankers.

Conference sessions involved dissecting Mark Renneker's "in absentia" address to the 4th Annual Conference of the S.M.A. and discussions regarding elections of Australian "Office Bearers".

It was agreed we should have Australian Chapter S.M.A. representatives. The challenge was clear: Australia has a huge surfing population base but poor S.M.A. representation. In fact only 6.7% of total S.M.A. membership is from Australia, compared with Hawaii (14%) and even the Mid-West of U.S.A. (5.2%).

Nominations put forward were:

Australian kahuna, Simon Leslie  
(proposed Dr. Geoff/seconded Steve Shapiro)

Publicity kahuna, Jim Bradley  
(proposed Simon Leslie/seconded

Rick Lucas)  
Scientific kahuna, Brian Lowdon  
(proposed Simon Leslie/seconded John Small)

One of the S.M.A. group will be writing to all Australian members to arrange a ballot to seek further nominations or if these are not forthcoming to verify the above office bearers.

## CHAPTER XIII

Thursday, 6th July saw another Zodiac "surf and destroy" expedition to Windmills Reef. On this occasion B.F.C. T.V. News Commentary Team Max Headswell and Chuck Heavealot were aboard as special guests. Surfing conditions were outstanding. Rick, the Z-boat driver, skillfully zig-zagged between reefs and dropped the contestants for the "Station 10,000". This was in fact the final between Australia (Rick Gath-Hat) and U.S.A. (Stevie-Maun Poon-Chock Freak-Shapiro).

Let me tell you the standard of surfing was extraordinary — perhaps only just eclipsed by the standard of T.V. commentary. Huge waves pounded towards the fragile Z-boat as Dr. Geoff skillfully steered for position on the sinister inner reefs (only losing 3 shear pins all up). On this occasion I'm afraid to say, dear readers, that Steve Shapiro won. Yes, he beat the legendary Aussie. Steve was surfing his 6'13", 1" thick, twin-fin Maun Poon. Steve's prize: he got to share his 3 remaining Mars Bars that hadn't

been stolen and eaten by the ravenous T.V. crew, commentators, fishermen and non-participating surfers.

Now, I've been sworn to secrecy about this session but be prepared to see some frightening footage on future editions of Wild World of Sports.

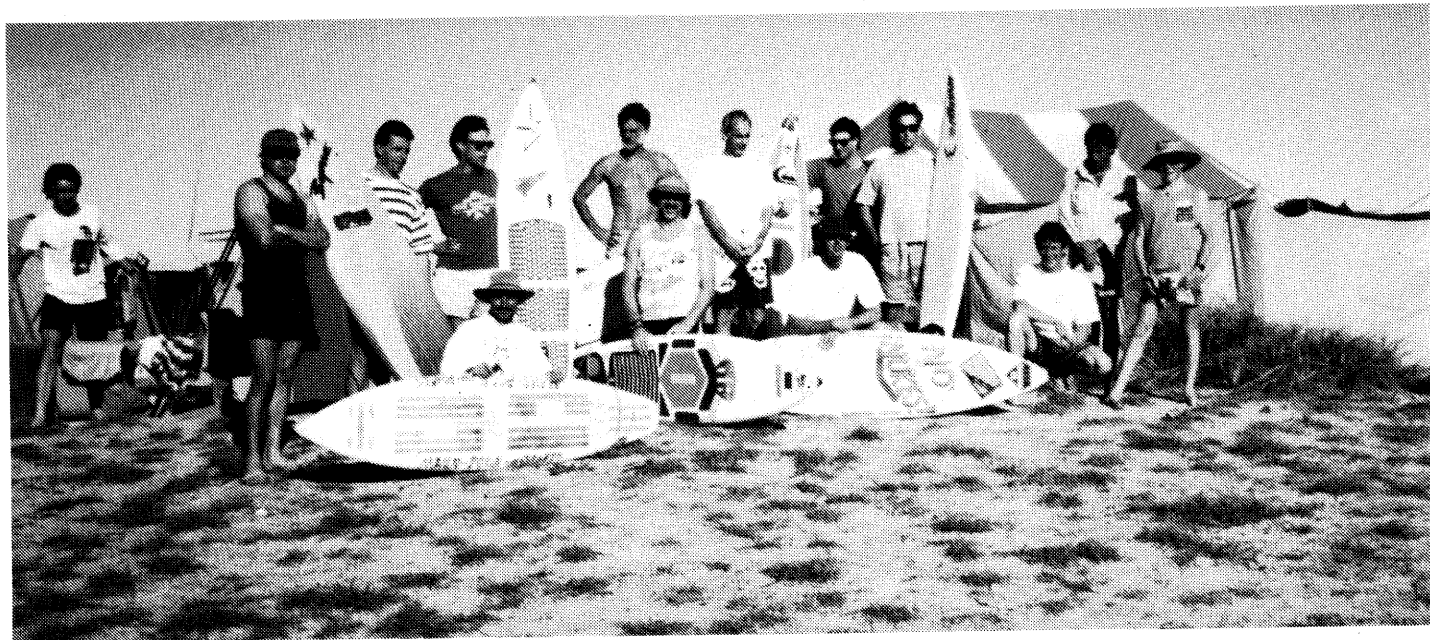
A mellow afternoon exploded into an all-time orgasm of fireside jokes and repartee. Steve's impersonation of Gerry Gee being an all time crutch-wetting classic.

Ace W.A. photog, John Small, presented a truly outstanding slide show of W.A. surf, wind wanking and flora/fauna. Some of the insane Jakes barrels had to be seen to be believed. The slide show was a true highlight and enjoyed by the conference participants as well as campers from the area even as far south as Camp Of The Moon.

## CHAPTER XIV

Friday was another super early session at Turtles. The swell was definitely up from the south but there was some ominous north-west cross swell: the dreaded northerly was not far away. However, early birds were rewarded before these winds struck.

A conference review meeting was arranged after lunch that day. Good solid Gestalt surfaced, spurred by some mindless folie a deux (or perhaps it was a trois) games. My belief is that surfers are essentially existential Peter Pans. Those who don't like it can go try and change



The SMA 4th Annual Conference crew. Photo by Steve Shapiro

other sub-cultural arenas (or perhaps light bulbs). They'll certainly never change surfers; not even professional surfing has been able to alter this basic tenant.

That evening, as three of the crew hit Tombstone for a late one, four giant hump back whales cruised 400 metres or so outside the line up symbolically putting man/woman in his/her place.

## CHAPTER XV

Saturday was packing up day. Bill drove the Gnaraloo Mercedes loaded with my two kids, me and my last intact surfboard, to Carnarvon for the 6 a.m. milk run to Perth.

At 11 p.m. that night, Martin from West Coast Surfari, efficiently picked us up from the bus depot and whisked us back to the Sands Motel (no doubt thankful for his chronic sinusitis and therefore inability to be able to smell two weeks of desert living). Clothing delousing, a steaming hot shower and late night videos were followed by dreamtime.

## EPILOGUE

A visit to Bond City, a whimsical fingering of lurid hamster (Gerbil) postcards at the International Gift Shop, watching a hot surf contest at Scarborough Beach (2-3' lefts) and a final excellent meal at Di Maggio's were my recollections of that last day as we staggered aboard the Ansett midnight non-stop flight to Sydney.

What a conference. Having so far been to all four S.M.A. Scientific Meetings I can safely say that this conference had all the high adventure, fun, scientific stimulation, comraderie and surf that one could wish for.

Thanks to Jim Bradley, Dean Forsyth and his West Coast Surfari crew, Ansett Airlines, Tropic of Capricorn Station and Camp Managers (Max, Louise & Paul), fellow campers, all conference participants and Huey for allowing this conference to happen.

Monte Bello Islands for 1990?

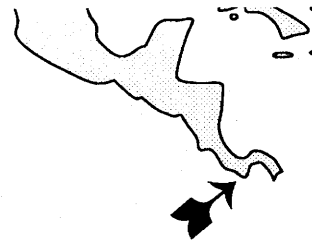
**SEE  
PAGE  
44  
FOR  
FUTURE  
CONFERENCE  
INFO!!!**



*The Bluff. Photo by John Small*

# THE SMA IN COSTA RICA

## FEBRUARY 3-17, 1990



*Editor: The following articles and photos basically tell the whole story. What's not included is the high-drama leading up to the conference — which is covered later in the Journal, in "The Morris Saga."*

*The first piece consists of excerpts from a diary kept by Dennis Burke, whose perspective on the conference (and the SMA) is unique. Dennis is a "I'll Join Anything" member, which means that he is not a surfer. He is the first "I'll Join Anything" member to attend an SMA conference. (He happened to join the SMA because, along with the Lion's Club in Berkeley, he is also a volunteer board member with the Cancer Education and Prevention Center (in Oakland, California). At one of their board meetings, a typical fund-raising discussion was underway, and Mark Renneker (a fellow board member) presented the SMA model of having paid memberships as a means of raising funds. Upon hearing about the great places the SMA holds its conferences, and never having been anywhere so exotic (and having not had a real vacation in years), Dennis signed up on the spot — and begin blocking out time for the next trip.)*

*Dennis is also a policeman, having served 25 years with the Berkeley police force. He is with the Homicide Division.*



## COSTA RICA

*Iguanas, indeed! Photo by Patricia Aguilar, from Edita Publicaciones, Costa Rica*

### MURDER HE WROTE

by Dennis Burke,  
Berkeley, California

*Prologue: Normally my wife Marlene takes care of the travel journal, while I watch the finances. So, this journal is starting a little late — ten days into the trip, mainly because I would like to capture some of the great stories now, while I still remember them.*

#### The Plane Ride

The seats were very uncomfortable. I did not sleep at all — so I had been up for over 28 hours by the time we landed. All the time I was saying, "Marlene would never had made it." My foot fell asleep; I couldn't walk the aisle because of the serving cart.

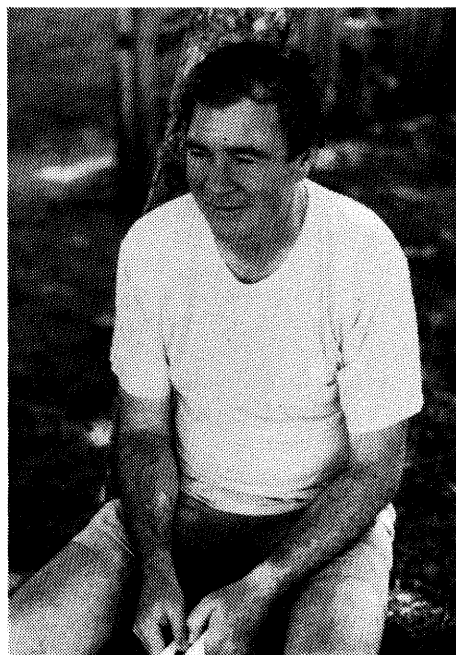
The plane stopped four times: Mexico, Guatamala, and two other stops. Each time, I only had enough time to

stretch my legs and go back to the seat "I learned to hate."

I met a U.S. "leather salesman," William, 32. As we talked, he told me how he got on. They were overbooked and had cancelled his reservations and told him he couldn't board. He pulls out a \$100 bill and gives it to the head airline honcho, and they move a young girl from the front row and put her in the "jump seat" next to the pilot.

#### Arrival at the Airport

We were met by Alex the tour guide. We get our group picture — everyone in surfers' attire except me — sports coat, shirt and tie in 100 degree humidity/temperature. I'm told to watch my luggage because of thieves. I begin to relax because I'm with the group. I noted that my big suitcase was missing. Gone. I'm sure my clothes are being sold on the black market and I will be sleeping in my underwear with no sleeping bag.



Dennis Burke. Pavones, Costa Rica.  
Photo by Mark Renneker



I panic, look around and see Alex the tour guide pick up a couple of other suitcases. He wants to go, so he is loading the big white Mercedes bus with surf boards and suitcases. I check the bus — no brown suitcase. I ask him if he picked it up and he says, "Sure, not to worry." I worry. When we arrived at "Casa Maria", my bag was there.

During this trip I began to develop a theory that to worry is a waste of time because it distracts you from having a good time when things are going good. When things are bad, you take action and do the best you can based on your experience.

### Casa Maria

Casa Maria is on the outskirts of San Jose, the capital of Costa Rica. The idea was to have a place we could go straight to from the plane and spend the night, recovering. Bill and Bob run this house as a Bed and Breakfast — loose but good security from the outside world. Iron gates, tall fences. They had two cars stolen from the driveway a week prior because the gate had been left open.

Bill runs the show, Bob drinks and tells stories. With the eighteen of us, it becomes catch, catch can, limited rooms. So Mark and Jessica end up sleeping in the same room with another married



*Dennis at Casa Maria —before the flight, and before the arduous bus trip and calorie-saving meals at Pavones.  
Photo by Mark Renneker*

couple [sic]. Marlene would have killed me had she been here.

### PeeWee's First Adventure to Town: Trip to a Supermarket

This is where I was able to buy sunscreen which literally saved my hide. I walked through the store picking up items like a comb, suntan lotion, potato chips (Papás) and a candy bar. This came to about 810.05 colones (\$9.50). About 5 minutes into the store, armed security guards are following me around, watching me because I have the items in my hand, and not in a basket. No shoplifting in this store: steal and you die. I pay for my items and leave.

En route to town, I had made a crude map of the route, which was better than leaving bread crumbs to follow back to "home." Since it was pre-election night, all the locals were in cars blowing horns and showing support for their candidates. Even the youth were involved.

The plan was to get to sleep early, get up and eat breakfast at 6:00 a.m. and be on the road at 7:00 a.m. and be into Pavones at 4:00 p.m. — 9 hours. I wake up late, at 7:00 a.m. Breakfast was almost gone — coffee and juice and fruit were still available. At 7:45 I finished and loaded my things on the bus and we left by 8:30. One and a half hours late. This was going to put us in Pavones at about 5:30 p.m., which is sunset, time for all the conference people to get situated.

### The Trip to Pavones

We began the trip with Alex the tour guide and Manuel the driver (who spoke no English) explaining a little about the countryside. This was all of five minutes — end of guided tour. The doctor who put together this tour, Dr. Bracker, got ahold of the mike and talked for about two-and-a-half hours about the lobsters and beefsteak, and wonderful Muriel (the mamacita who runs the cantina at Pavones). He talked about the gigantic waves that would be there, the wonderful birds and animals we would see, the twenty lobster tails we could each expect for dinner, and quizzed us about how bananas grow.

The bus proceeded to enter the high land mountains; miles above sea level — 12,000 ft, with clouds and rain so hard that you could not see out the windows. How the bus driver got through the winding roads and passed all the slow

logging trucks is a mystery to me. At least it was daylight, though.

### The Bridges and Panama

As we got closer to the Panama border, we saw more checkpoints for passengers where passports were checked. Of course they had a hard time



*Dr. Bracker Sr., Mark Bracker's dentist dad came on the trip. There were two father-son combos on this trip.*

*Photo by Mark Renneker*

believing we were U.S. medical doctors, looking like beach bum surfers with boards, beards and "broads."

At the Panama border it looked like Tijuana with all its vendors and filth. As we got closer to Pavones, the roads got worse. We slowed to five mph going over rotten wooden bridges that barely held the bus. Once we all had to get off so there'd be less weight for the bus to make it. The tour guide asked locals for directions several times, leaving us with the impression that we were lost.

### The Break Down

One washed out bridge, about 2 miles from the Cantina (which in reality was more like 7 miles) posed a problem. The bridge was washed out, and although we saw a four-wheel drive get across the muddy, rocky river, when the bus driver tried, he didn't get ten-feet before the bottom of his brand new Mercedes bus got caught, breaking the drain-plug of the on-board potty tank, spilling human waste into the river — much to the delight of all the ecology-minded doctors.

The bus driver, who had been driving for 8 to 9 hours, had had it. It was 4:30 p.m., we were not going to make it by bus, and the sun was going down. No way Jose, was he going any further.



*The bus driver insisted all the boards had to go inside - so with some creative rigging we had an all-board ceiling. Photo by Mark Renneker*

### First Casualty of the Trip

Jessica, Mark's girlfriend, decided she needed her exercise after riding on the bus all day. And, being told we were only 2 miles away from the Cantina by Mark Bracker, "the one who should know," she decided to jog there instead of standing around amidst all the pained and puzzled faces. Off she went. Others grabbed what they could carry and set off trekking behind her.

### The Rescue

As luck would have it, within minutes a farmer with a large truck stopped and offered to take all of our luggage, personnel and baggage to the Cantina for \$20.00. The bus driver paid it, figuring he could get the hell out of there and make it back to town for his "hot date."

As we loaded in, one atop of each other, I again was thankful that Marlene was not there because if she hadn't killed me at the airport, she would surely have now.

Jessica was holding her eye when we caught up with her about three miles down the road. Apparently a bug of some kind had landed in her eye. She said it hurt a lot. Earlier, we had heard a delightful story from Dr. Bracker about

some kid who got a blood-sucking, pus-forming tic in his eye. Meanwhile, the Cantina was nowhere in sight. It was sunset, beautiful with a dark sky and fast moving black "boomer" clouds closing in.

By the time we arrived at the Cantina,

darkness had fallen. There is no Muriel, the innkeeper. It is election night, and she is at the polls counting ballots. The police are at the Cantina to enforce no alcoholic beverages being sold. The girls in the kitchen are fixing dinner and we stand around trying to get some water because of the long, hot bus drive. They open the soda bar and I get a ginger ale which was good and cold. I feel pretty good and in good spirits that I'm alive and well and not sitting in a bus or plane seat.

### Sleeping Accommodations

While waiting for sleeping accommodations in the small rooms above the cantina, the tenters went to their area and set up in the dark. A few had good lighting, which helped them see what they were doing. Jessica tried to get one of the doctors to help her with her eye, and finally one of them saw the problem - there really was a tic, or a beetle, or some kind of bug, that had burrowed into the lower edge of her eye. Mark Renneker performed minor surgery, and managed to remove it. Jessica, by this time, was not too happy.

Sleeping was easy since I was sun-dried and exhausted from the two days. The bed was small, with a lump from the boards holding up the mattress. The pillow was very musty (mildew). I used



*The SMA's Exxon-Valdez disaster. Photo by Ron Bockhold*

one of my towels over the pillow to cut the smell. It rained all night with hurricane force and probably dropped a good eight inches. There were no mosquitos, but friendly spiders on the walls — not many, though. Very nice hardwood floors and wooden walls. And the surf was right out the window.

### Breakfast

The sun rose after the night of rain, as if it was expected, not to be denied its job of providing pleasant days for us. It was not humid, but warm. The water was about 87 degrees, and the river a little cooler, at 82 degrees.

Breakfast consisted of pancakes with honey. These pancakes were dynamite. They did not give me that carbohydrate let-down because they were cooked with palm oil or beef fat and had plenty of fresh eggs in the batter. The Costa Rica coffee was brewed fresh. [It was so good, I ended up taking pounds of it home with me. I'm president of the Coffee Club at the station, but none of the other guys would drink it.]

I was having a hard time getting enough fluids so I drank some of the tap water in the morning (not knowing whether I would come down with diarrhea). Twelve hours later, no problem, so I figured the water supply was okay. But I still drank "jugo" (pronounced "hugo"), which was orange juice in a carton.

I took a walk around and saw where three iguanas lived near the camping sites and I watched them eat their breakfast: rotting fruit. Wild orange and lemon trees grew where people had thrown seeds. The iguanas ate the fruit on the ground and climbed in the trees.

The ocean had small three to four foot waves, which to the surfers was a great disappointment. They were expecting six to ten foot waves or bigger. I bodysurfed the waves in carefully because of the many rocks, employing my "Russian River" practice of wearing my tennis shoes while swimming. For next time, things to get: boogie board, mask and fins.

Dinner was beefsteak, so tough that shoe leather was too polite a description. But tasty, and low in animal fat. Of course, rice and beans with "lizard" sauce. The true name was "lazano" sauce, and it is a vinegar/spice sauce with a little hot pepper for seasoning. A greenish color, and very good on rice and beans. No dessert.



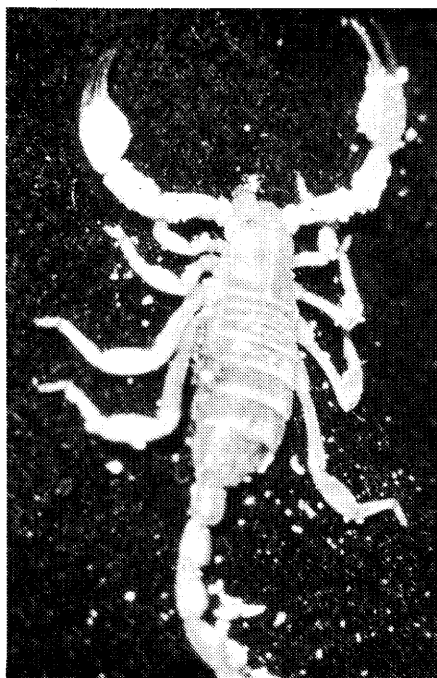
*The Pavones cantina sits right on the point, in front of the surf—with braceros and outlaw surfers powering the cervezas while the waves peel by.*

*Photo by Mark Renneker*

Ecology lecture and slide show at 8:00 p.m., with slide show of prior surfing adventures. I found that I was completely relaxed, and thoroughly enjoying myself doing "nothing." I was at ease the first day.

### Second Casualty

When we arrived, one of the campers saw a scorpion dash into his tent, into his clothes. He was able to get it out, and it ran off into the underbrush. The locals said they were not very poisonous, that if you were bit it was like a bee sting.



*Scorps. Photo by Small*

Norma, one of the camping wives, had been brave the whole time, and doesn't really remember getting bit by anything, but one morning she woke up with a bite on her leg the size of a half dollar. Her husband, skin doctor Richard, was able to pull out what appeared to be a sac (still pulsating) and a pincher. It is suspected that she was bitten by an unknown spider or by a scorpion who left the pulsating sac and stinger in her during the night.

He put some medication on it. As the day went on she developed chills and fever, with pain and swelling around the bite. The next day, the bite was the size of an orange.

Had this happened to Marlene, I'd be dog meat by now. Each of these events convinced me that I had to be careful. I continued to use my bug spray and looked forward to civilization. That night I went to bed early and dreamed of spiders and scorpions. In the morning I awoke to find a dead cockroach, 2 1/2" x 3/4" in bed with me. During the night I had rolled over and crushed it.

### Patrick's Place

A group of us were invited to see Patrick's "rain forest" project. Patrick is a retired San Diego County lifeguard who went out on a medical pension at age 38, four years ago. He and his wife bought twenty-five acres and put about \$125,000 into this project which includes uncut trees and rain forest with monkeys, birds and other animals. He is trying to make it into a preserve, selling shares of one-tenth

interest in order to recoup some of his investment. The forest would not be cut, and each owner would have one tenth right to the land as a whole. He has contacted universities and invited them to study the flora and fauna in the forest using his land as a base point. Next year, Princeton University has committed to coming and setting up camp. He and his wife are very knowledgeable about the area, its people and politics.

### The Richest Man in Pavones

En route to Patrick's house, we passed through an area where cattle were grazing. On this land, a small red house with no electricity or modern conveniences was located under some tall hardwood trees. This house had simple looking people with poorly dressed children and looked like lower Tijuana. This was the house of the richest man in Pavones. He had lots of land and had cleared many acres of it - cutting down the trees - and on it he raised cattle for exportation. He had thousands of dollars in the bank and lived like a peasant, keeping his wife cooking on a wood-burning stove.

The problem with clearing the trees in the rain forest is that the soil is rich in nutrients from tree debris. Remove the trees, and the soil soon vanishes (the slightest rain washes it away, down the rivers - hurting the river environment, and down into the ocean - hurting the ocean environment (wrecking reefs, for instance). Where the trees were becomes barren - a desert, within years not even able to support grass for cattle. So new land is cleared for the cattle, and on it goes.

Patrick had explained to the man that cutting trees near his water supply would

eventually cause the rain water not to percolate into the underground water supply. He still cut, and for the first time, the water dried up. The man is still cutting trees. Patrick has been working with the son of the owner, talking to him about replanting hardwood trees and re-foresting the land. It will take the younger generation to do it, because the old man will only look at short-term profit.

From the house, we could see where someone had cleared part of the hill and planted beans. Patrick said it was his land that squatters had settled last year. They had cut about \$10,000 worth of hardwood and burned it, in order to get a \$500 crop of beans. It took him a year going through legal methods to get them off his land, plus thousands in attorney's fees. He thinks he has won.

### The Rain Forest

Walking in the rain forest was very enlightening. It was hot and sticky before going in, but cool and refreshing inside. Not at all humid, lots of good oxygenated smells. The river was cooler, about 80 degrees, with small fish and shrimp. We saw one monkey in the tree and lots of colorful small birds. We ate wild oranges, and sat by the river listening to a lecture from Ron Bockhold on the Living Earth. This had real meaning as we sat there - actually in the rainforest - hearing how everyone was dependent on the ecological system for survival, and how it was being destroyed.

Afterwards, we headed out back down the river and up through the forest, seeing lots of ugly bugs and watching for poisonous snakes, which are so deadly that they can take you down with one bite.

### The Clinic

All the locals were told that a group of "medicos from USA" were coming and would see patients. Mark Renneker stated he didn't want to do a "Great White Doctor" thing of healing and leaving them with nothing. The SMA had brought several copies of Where There is No Doctor in Spanish and English, and planned to show some of the key people in the village how to use them. I was even encouraged to be an instructor since my knowledge of medicine was far greater than the average client who would be seen.

I participated in the clinic and saw two patients, using the book with Dr. Tom Yarema (who works in the emergency ward in San Diego). He gave me some good strokes about how I did and we had a good time. I discussed a little about fingerprints and some of the politics of Berkeley, and wasn't as angry as I usually am when talking about those things.

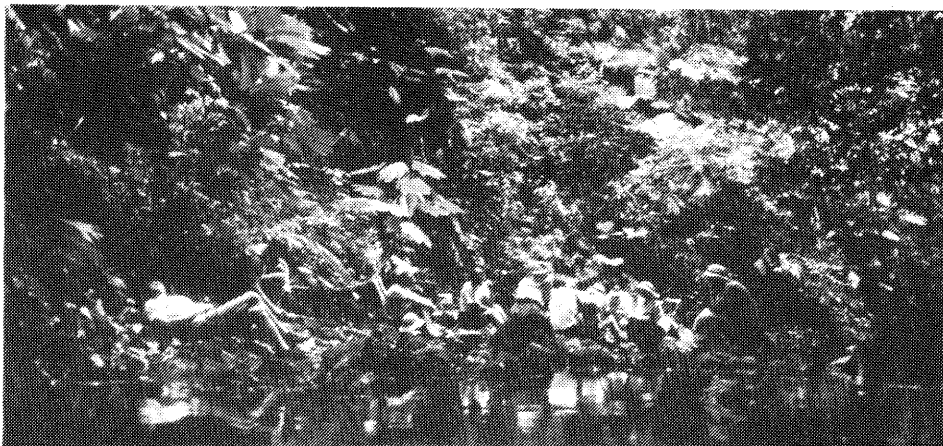
### River Exploration

I gathered up my "people" and other things. Brought some laundry soap, and headed for the river to a shady rock. En route I saw the local Indians washing and beating clothes at their spot and enjoying the nice day after the night of rain. (Rained the second time.)

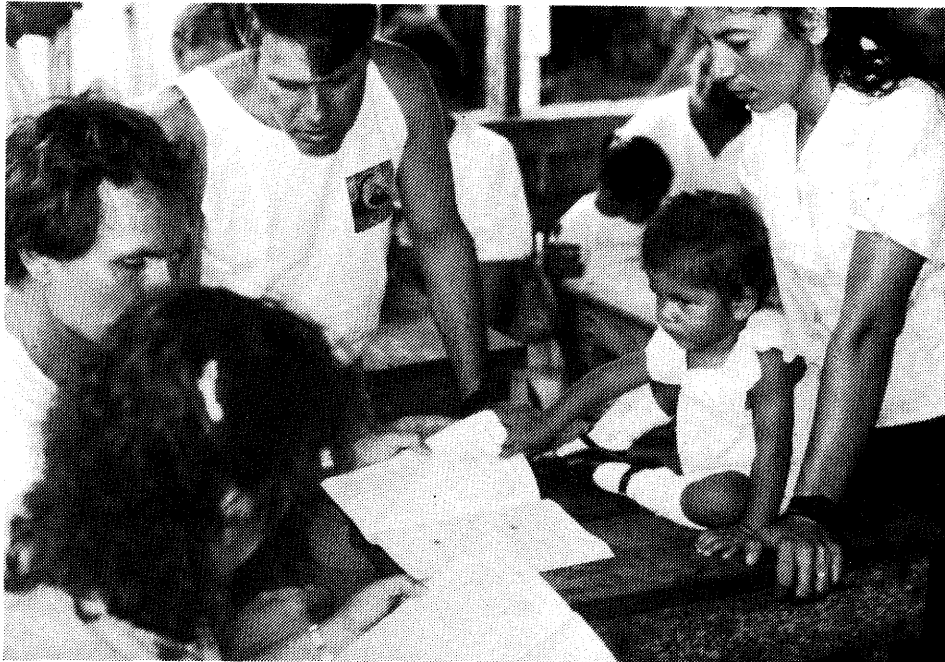
While washing clothes I saw an iguana coming to the river for water, "Jesus Lizards" walking across the river in narrow spots and a black sloth in the tree. The most birds that I saw were pelicans, white cow-tending egrets and some black birds with large red spots on the belly. I took a walk up the river, getting bitten by mosquitos a few times, and looked for gold. I picked up a couple of small rocks as examples of the rock.

### The Chowline

Notes on the kitchen help: the three ladies have a pecking order: #1 Boss, #2 Boss, #3 slave. I would wait to see what they were serving and then try to order in Spanish what everyone else was having. I generally ended up pointing and saying "totales" — everything. When I would come up to order my meal, the help would see me coming and as soon as I opened my mouth, they would roll their eyes, as if to say "Good God, here we go again." I would give them my name each time so they could charge my bill for the



The SMA holding its first seminar in the rain forest. Photo by Mark Renneker



*SMA clinic in Pavones, using David Werner's "Where There is No Doctor."  
Photo by Mark Renneker*

meals. A hang loose arrangement, but they did good.

We had a fantastic lunch consisting of a red snapper type of fresh fish fried with "Papas de Franchise," french fried potatoes. After lunch it was time to take a nap and get ready for the next lecture on the environment, which was held on the open river. Dinner was spaghetti with some canned tuna in sauce. I was still looking for my twenty lobster tails.

### Boat Trip

From the group who went across the bay on Wednesday, I found out that the trip was fun. They went to this river, near a rain forest preserve, walked up the river and saw some birds — toucans, minah birds, etc. They had to walk in water that was waist deep, but no problem, and I decided to go. Mark B said they were leaving early, about 8:00 a.m., and I was ready to go at 7:00. At 9:00 we left, right on "Tico Time."

The trip was smooth, not like the day before when it took them an hour to get the engine started. Some of the Drs. had put on the patch for sea sickness; I didn't because of the side effects. Also, it was smooth and I didn't get sick.

### Swim for the Shore

When we got to where we were going, I discovered that it was a different

place than where they'd gone the day before. This place was really in the wilds. It had an Indian family living at the entrance to a river.

About 500 feet from shore the boat stops because the waves are about 6 feet tall according to the surfers and about 15 feet tall according to me. (I measured them later as they came crashing down on me). Everyone jumped into the water with their surfboards and boogie boards.

I jumped in with my shorts and tennis shoes on. I knew all I had to do was float on my back and back-stroke to shore. The waves would help. Well, I swam and I floated and finally the waves pushed me ashore like a drowned rat. I was huffing and puffing, because there was a little rip-tide that I had to fight. Everyone thought I was a strong swimmer. Who else would have swum with their shoes on?

### Meeting the Costa Rican Indians

I saw the ancestors of the Pre-Columbians there at the river. Bad teeth, pregnant, with two other children. Real Indian features with broad nose and distinctive facial features, not like the European blend of Costa Ricans.

We saw a lot of wild fruits and common house plants by the river, with "Tarzan of the Apes" vines and many varieties of flowers and wild orchids. There were a lot of fungi and insects to study. One large bright blue butterfly had no fear of us and landed so close I could have picked it off with my fingers. We found a small waterfall and I played in it, soaking up all the negative ions. I really felt good after the bath, and wished I could have stayed longer. The water was cool, and being full of sea water, sand and sweating, it felt great. We never did see any birds other than the sea birds, nor did we see any monkeys. We did see some footprints in the sand near the river.



*SMA members explore the rain forest. That is not a rain forest dog, he probably belonged there even less than us (Patrick's pooch). Photo by Ron Bockhold*



*Most of the Pavones group went over to the Caribbean side in the second week, exploring for surf in Puerto Viejo - finding some, but also a Brazilian surf team (shown here checking it out). The Pixote Surf Lodge put us up - an excellent place, they'd like to see us back for a full-on SMA conference. Photo by Mark Renneker*

## The Rescue

When it was time to go back to the boat, the sea was a lot rougher, with 15 foot waves. Everyone got on their surfboards and set off paddling while I tried to swim. The first time I tried I ran out of breath one-fourth of the way (125 ft) out, turned around and came back. The waves were too strong, and I didn't have the strength to make it. My heart was beating so fast that I was scared. It was hard to "not worry, be happy" when the alternative is sleeping on the beach with sand crabs.

Patrick and Dr. Tom could see the problem, got a boogie board for me and swam and pushed me out past the breakers. Once we got past the breakers I felt I could relax and enjoy. Wrong.

The boat came in to help and got too close to the breaking waves. The skipper had to suddenly hightail back to sea, with me at the tail of the boat holding on with all my might, trying to keep my feet out of the screw of the outboard motor. When we did stop, I didn't have enough upper-body strength left to pull myself into the boat. And, again they had to keep going because they began drifting back into the waves. This time I was sure I was going to be lost at sea. Finally, I got pulled in by my shirt and pants, and was glad to get the hell out of there.

It was exciting, but to have my heart beating that fast I would rather be working and getting paid to be that

scared. However, it was a fun time after I was safe and on the boat.

I elected not to go to the Caribbean side for the second week when I heard that the surf was as rough or rougher. I also give a lot of credit to the surfers who get out there in those "egg beaters" and survive.

## The Big Dance (last night)

This was a good dance according to the locals. Only one fight between neighbors who had a grudge, too many beers, and an opportunity to push and shove. They walked out of the dance to fight and the armed guards handcuffed them and took them for a walk. Later they came back the best of friends. They probably will have another dance again.

## Departure and Danger

Some of the group had been surfing since 5 a.m. due to high waves from a storm off the coast. They are in surfers' heaven. I pay my bill — Madeleine figures it out and Chico takes the money. One week, food, lodging, sodas: \$81.00 American.

By far the most dangerous part of this trip was driving at night back over the mountains. A thick mist-fog sets in at night at those high levels and you can't see your hand in front of your face, much less pass on blind curves, avoid logging trucks, and all that.

The bus driver was good, and we got back in one piece. The newspaper on the table when we arrived had a picture of an overturned tourist bus full of injured Canadian tourists. We were glad we had made it.

## The Bus Driver and the Priest

Marco, the Tico who takes tours and drives people to the airport, told a "true" story of the local priest on a bus that crashed. Both the priest and the bus driver went to heaven. But once there, St. Peter sends the priest to the small cells with bread, water and a prayer book, and no talking to the other priests. And the bus driver gets sent to the Grand Palace with deluxe accommodations, parties, fun and a great time. After a month, the priest goes back to St. Peter, and wants to know why the bus driver gets the good place while he, the priest, was one with all the Good Deeds and service?

St. Peter says, "When you were preaching on Sunday, your people were asleep. But when your people were on the bus driver's bus, they were praying like mad."

## Final Thoughts

I heard Dr. John tell son Jacob that the countryside reminded him of the time he was in Vietnam. He had enlisted in the army and figured he would not be shipped to Vietnam because his brother was a career officer and already in Vietnam. Army rules will not send two brothers to the armed front at the same time. He went through non-com training and worked up to sergeant, training personnel to go to Vietnam. His brother, a helicopter pilot, was shot down and had to leave Vietnam - so in comes John. He was sent to the front for a year. He was in charge of a unit; fought fire-fight with back up air support, and did wait-and-watch ambush. His story was really interesting, about how he felt being there and why the war was never won.

As I listened to his story about being there in 1970, I reflected on the whole trip and on what I did in Berkeley. My final thought was that things are getting better. The Berlin Wall is down, Communism and Cold Wars are past, and the future looks good.

# OPENING ADDRESS, OR "HOW I STOPPED LIVING AND BECAME A CRAZY MIXED-UP SMA ECO-ZOMBIE"

by Ron Bockhold,  
given February 5, 1990,  
in a Costa Rican rainforest

*Editor: Ron gave a series of seminars at the Costa Rica conference. He is a pilot with Northwest airlines, but has done a lot of volunteer work with the United Nations Environmental Programme. What follows are excerpts from his opening seminar, the second seminar, and thoughts on the whole experience.*

"Buenos Caballeros, my name is Ron Buckhold and welcome to Costa Rica. It feels good to be here and it is exciting to be attending a Surfer's Medical Association conference. This is my first one and so I'm not quite sure what to expect. The circumstances of my involvement are somewhat amusing and a tale worth telling.



Dennis—after the trip to Pavones, pounds lighter and feeling good.  
Photo by Mark Renneker



Ron and his seminar blaster. Pavones, Costa Rica. Photo by Mark Renneker

I first read about this conference in your last SMA journal issue. At the time, I had been envisioning organizing a conference for surfers on the environment and I called the SMA Executive Director, Tony Peckham. I had some suggestions for this conference.

Now, Tony is a very optimistic and persuasive man. He wanted to meet in person. I told him I would be passing through San Francisco for a few hours soon, but really wouldn't have time to come out to the beach, where he lives. He said "Good, then we can meet closer to the downtown area." So he says take this train here and this subway there and he'll be waiting at his favorite watering hole. Well, by the time I arrived at this bar I realized it was only a short distance to his beach home anyway.

So we meet and he invites me to attend this conference. I said I doubted seriously if I could get the time off. He says, "Great, now when you get down there, could you bring some United Nations environmental material for the presentations by the environmental spokesman." I said, "Maybe, but who is the person speaking?" He says, "You!"

I said, "No, I don't think so. I'm not a public speaker or an educator." Then he says, "Well that's great, now when you organize and present your materials, could you make it into a seven day environmental workshop/course?" I said, "That's impossible." He says, "That's wonderful, see you down in Pavones!"

It was a real dilemma trying to decide what material to organize and present here. This is the first time I've taken on a project such as this. Talking to typically unconcerned fun-seeking surfers would require one approach, and talking to highly educated doctors and

responsible leaders would require a quite different approach. When you combine both of the personality types in the same individual, then you're probing into unknown territory. What I decided was to structure a course to offer an introduction and some insight into what the current environmental problems are, and then offer some suggestions as to how we as individuals and as an organization could best utilize our talents to help change the course of current events.

We need to discover how we can effect change within our normal sphere of activities. Time is against us now. We can no longer wait for others to solve our problems. We need to take over the helm of this supertanker (the planet earth), help to slow down its current direction and then help to steer it onto a different course. Just like the Exxon tanker in Alaska, the captain is asleep and we're heading right for the rocks. If we want things to change, then we must become the planet managers.

In keeping with the spirit of a medical conference, I intend to treat the living planet much as you would a medical patient. We will examine it, discuss and diagnose the problems, and attempt to prescribe some remedies.

The material for the upcoming seven workshops on "Healing the Earth" was derived mostly from the excellent reference book *Gaia: An Atlas for Planet Management*, written by the general editor Dr. Norman Meyers with the collaboration of countless concerned individuals.

To give you a general idea of where our investigation may lead, I will attempt to show what a complex and magnificent world we have inherited, how it works, and what bad stewards we have often been of this inheritance. After each topic

presentation I will encourage a lively exchange and think-tank sessions of specific strategies we can utilize in the future to become better stewards. The material will have an underlying theme that will trace down the ills that confront us, from starvation, disease and even war itself, back to three root causes: over-population, political stupidity and wasteful misuse of the planet's treasures.

We are told that Adam and Eve were banished from the Garden of Eden into the world. We too are banishing ourselves from our own Garden of Eden, the planet Earth. But unlike Adam and Eve we have nowhere else to move to. Once

we have ruined and used up this Eden, there is no other. This planet is the only one we have. Already we have become refugees of a sort. Here in Costa Rica we seek cleaner water, uncrowded beaches, natural landscapes, natural flora and fauna. We have lost much of that in California, Florida and the Gulf Coast states. We have come to Costa Rica as environmental refugees.

Let us be ever so thankful that there is still somewhere to go. And let us keep in mind what we can do to preserve such natural beauty. Let us treat Costa Rica with respect and gratitude. Thank you."

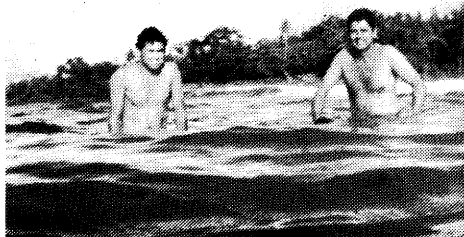
## THE LIVING EARTH

by Ron Bockhold  
(Second in a series of lectures at Pavones, Costa Rica, February, 1990)

"What I'm going to present now is from *Gaia, Atlas for Planet Management*. It reads:

"The sphere of rock on which we live coalesced from the dust of ancient stars. Orbiting round the huge hydrogen furnace of the sun, bathed by radiant energy and the solar wind, the globe is white hot and molten beneath the crust: continents ride in a slow dance across its face, ocean floors spread. And between its dynamic surface and the vacuum of space, in a film as thin and vibrant as a spider's web, lies the fragile miracle we call the biosphere.

When the first astronauts circled the Earth in their tiny craft, millions of listeners heard them describe the beauty of this planet, "like a blue pearl in space," and were caught up in a moment of extraordinary human revelation. Since then, much has been written about "Spaceship Earth," on whose finite resources we all depend. And the more we explore the solar system, the more singular we understand our world to be. The atmospheric mix of gases, for instance, is entirely different not only from that of nearby planets but from what would be predicted by Earth's own chemistry. This "improbable" state of affairs appears to have arisen alongside the evolution of life, and persisted (with minor fluctuations) despite all possible accidental perturbations of cosmic travel, for perhaps two billion years. Life, by its very presence, is



Ron and Dr. Richard Stark, a hematologist from Australia who came for the conference with his fiance, Simone. In the water at Pavones. Photo by Tom Yarema

apparently creating, and maintaining, the special conditions necessary for its own survival.

It was a group of space scientists devising life-detection experiments for other planets who first stumbled on this phenomenon of the self-sustaining biosphere — and named it Gaia, the living planet. Since then, we have begun to learn much more about the planetary life-support systems which rule our lives — sadly, mainly by disturbing them.

Within this life realm, every organism is linked, however tenuously, to every other. Microbe, plant, and mammal, soil dweller and ocean swimmer, all are caught up in the cycling of energy and nutrients from sun, water, air, and earth. This global exchange system flows through various transport mechanisms, from ocean currents, to climate patterns and winds; from the travels of animals to the processes of feeding, growth, and decay. Information, too, flows through the biosphere — reproduction transfers the store of genetic coding to new generations and creates new experiments; learning and communication occur between individuals. And throughout the



Tom Yarema, Pavones, Costa Rica. Photo by Ron Bockhold

life zone, change and diversity, specialization and intricate interdependence, are found at every level.

It is with this remarkable planet, and what we are doing to it, and to ourselves, that this book is concerned. UFOs apart, we are unlikely to find another Gaia — should we destroy the one we have.

Gaia went its creative way for several billion years, becoming steadily more diverse, complex and fruitful. Then, in the last few seconds of life's "evolutionary day," *Homo sapiens* appeared — a creature that has wrought changes as great as several glaciations and other geological upheavals together, and has done it all within a flicker of the evolutionary eye. The evolution of *Homo sapiens* has produced a being that can think: a being that is aware, that can speculate about tomorrow.

Evolution has also equipped us to create our own form of planetary ecosystem. Whereas natural selection works through a trial-and-error process, undirected and unhurried, we can choose preferred forms of evolution, creating changes that might otherwise have taken millions of years to occur.

The greatest natural development through evolution in terms of energy conversion was the emergence of photosyn-



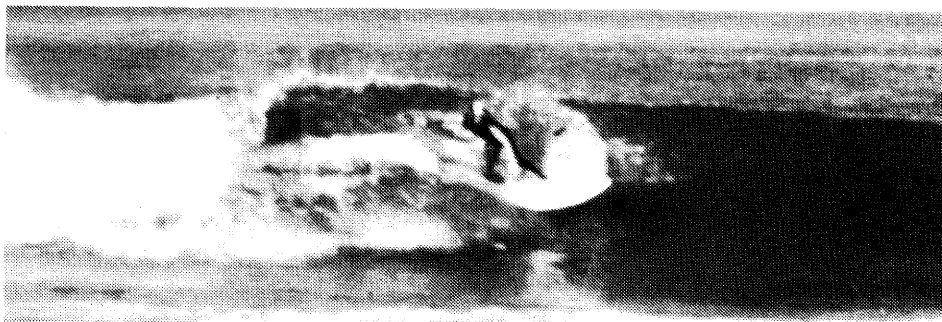
thesis, two billion years ago. A mere 50,000 years ago we learned to harness fire, and thus to use the stored energy of plants in the form of wood. A few hundred years ago we moved on to exploit coal, then oil. Now, however, we are on the verge of widespread exploitation of the sun's energy through solar cells — potentially marked as an advance for Earth's course as that of photosynthesis itself. Similar breakthroughs include domestication of wild species and genetic engineering: quantum leaps to match the evolution of sexual reproduction.

Among the greatest advances of all is our ability to control disease, and thus to increase our numbers. Within the last 150 years, the human population has grown from around one billion in the 1830s, to two billion in the 1930s, to four billion in 1975, and to almost five billion at present — with a further increase to over six billion projected by 1995. Herein we witness the phenomenon of exponential growth, a process that marks not only our increasing numbers, but also our consumption of energy and resources, our accumulating knowledge, and our expanding communications network.

Exponential growth is one of the most important concepts we shall encounter in this course. It is growth that is not simply additive (two plus two equals four and another two makes six); rather it is self-compounding (two multiplied by two equals four, multiplied by two equals eight). Very few people realize its implications for our future existence on Earth. If Africa, for example, maintains its present three percent growth rate until this time next century, its current half billion people will increase to 9.5 billion.

The advance beyond our entrenched expectation for exponential growth in consumption will probably represent the greatest evolutionary leap of all. Today, the rise of human numbers casts a shadow over planet Earth. We have reached a total of almost five billion people, and we are plainly failing to feed, house, educate, and employ many of these in basically acceptable fashion. Worse, the human community is projected to reach at least ten billion before the population explosion fizzles out into zero growth early in the 22nd century.

The problem does not lie only in a sheer outburst of human numbers. It lies also in an outburst of human consumerism. One billion over-affluent people enjoy lifestyles that impose a grossly disproportionate pressure on our planetary



*SMA accountant kahuna Tom Kever tallied up a lot of sessions at Pavones. The consensus on the surf for the trip was that it was about a "B," with rideable surf everyday, never going above two or three feet overhead. Two mornings were excellent, though. Photo by Mark Renneker*

ecosystem. This consumerism is powered in turn by a sudden expansion in technological know-how, enabling us to use and misuse ever-greater stocks of natural resources — even to use them up. In fact, rather than a "population crisis" or a "resource crisis," we should speak of a single over-arching crisis: the crisis of humankind. The shadow stems from all of us, and it will darken all our lives.

On land, we plough up virgin areas, even though most of them are marginal at best. Soil, one of the most precious of all resources, is washed or blown away in billions of tons every year. To compound this tragedy, large tracts of productive cropland are paved over each year, or "developed." Deserts expand, or rather degraded lands are tacked on to them, at a rate threatening a third of all arable land in the next 75 years. Forests in the tropics are chopped down with a zest that will leave little by the middle of the next

century. As the forests fall, species in their millions lose their habitats, many of them disappearing forever.

In the oceans, we ravage one fishery after another. We cause dolphins, seals, and other marine mammals to follow the sad track of the great whales. We pollute the seas, just as we poison lakes and rivers in virtually every part of the world. We use the skies as a dustbin, and we desecrate our landscapes with growing piles of refuse, some of it toxic. In the atmosphere, we disrupt the carbon dioxide balance, triggering climatic dislocations that will upset agriculture worldwide.

Not surprisingly, this overtaking of the Earth's ecosystem leads to breakdowns of other sorts. As more people seek greater amounts of declining resources, conflicts erupt: more people have been killed through military conflagrations since World War II than all the



*Jake Millard, red-hot at Pavones. Photo by Mark Renneker*

soldiers in that war. In fact, it is breakdown in our social systems, our economic structures, and our political mechanisms that generate the greatest threat of all. The shadow over planet Earth will never be deeper and darker than when it is lengthened by a mushroom cloud.

Humankind can be seen as either the climax of evolution's course, or as its greatest error. No other creature is a fraction so precocious. No other can think about the world, plan to make it better, and dream of the best possible. Yet no other reveals such capacity for perverse behaviour — for gross misuse of its habitat and for reckless proliferation of numbers, without thought for the consequences.

In a certain sense, humanity is becoming a super-malignancy on the face of the planet, spreading with insidious effect and fomenting ultimate crisis in covert fashion. A cancer cell is unusually vital, since it replicates itself with remarkable vigour; it is also exceptionally stupid, since it ends by killing the host upon which it depends for its survival. But unlike the cancer cell, we are coming to realize the nature of what we are doing. Can we learn fast enough, act soon enough?

This is not the first time that the Earth's community has encountered crisis. Gaia has even benefited from periodic upheavals. Were it not for the dramatic demise of the dinosaurs, there would have been scant opportunity for mammals to become pre-eminent — with all that has meant for the supreme mammal, *Homo sapiens*. Out of crisis can come advance, provided the impetus of change does not "overshoot" into catastrophe. On past occasions, there have been thousands of years, even millions, for the corrective workings of the biosphere to adapt and adjust to new stresses. This time, there are just a few decades, far too short a period for Gaia to work its restorative course, unless it is done with the symbiotic support of humankind.

If we can match up to the crisis, Gaia may well move forward into an unprecedented period of development — development in its proper broad sense, embracing development of Earth's resources and of humanity's capacity for caring. If, however, we fail, *Homo sapiens* could eventually be discarded as an evolutionary blind-alley.

To achieve a breakthrough, we must learn a tough lesson. While it is often all right to adapt through small steps,

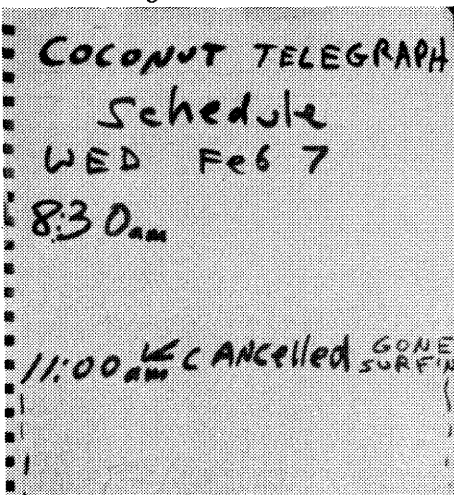
improving an established course through "fine tuning," there are times when one must do an "about turn," and take more drastic corrective action. The tale of the French schoolchildren and their experimental frog is salutary. They took the frog and dropped it into a saucepan of boiling water, whereupon the frog skipped right out — instant rejection of an environment that proved distinctly unsuitable. But when the schoolchildren dropped the frog into a saucepan of cold water and slowly heated it up, the frog swam round and round, adapting itself to the rising heat ... until it quietly boiled to death.

## REFLECTIONS ON A PAVONES SUNSET

by Ron Böckhold

As I gaze out of the window of this aging Costa Rican Boeing 727, I can't help but reflect on the incredible experiences I leave behind.

My mission was to present an intensive environmental awareness course entitled "Healing the Earth." The purpose of the course was to examine the environmental resource base, consider the impending worldwide crisis, and, finally, to propose management alternatives to these challenges. It was hoped the participants would leave the experience as incipient planet managers. There were some surprises as we moved towards this goal and the outcome was quite unexpected. There was a certain magic in the air. That magic facilitated a transforma-



The conference schedule, as posted at Pavones. Photo by Mark Renneker

tion of thinking, including my own.

I would like to thank the SMA for inviting me to attend and present the keynote seminars. It was both a pleasure and an honor. I also would like to thank the participants for sleeping in each morning. This allowed me to ride as many waves as possible during the dawn patrol sessions. It was also a great time to witness the tight aerobic formations of the wind- and wave-riding brown pelican squadrons.

Last night, I began reading Murray Dickson's book *Where There Is No Dentist*. Really, it's a book about one man's attempt to enter and understand another man's world. In this case, the world of providing primary dental care in primitive Papua New Guinea. As participants of the SMA conference, we also entered into another man's world. As I came away from this conference, I was hit hard by the responsibility that entry into another's life brings to us. If we approach people and if they take us in, we face becoming part of someone else's history. We are no longer a passing object, or an observer at the window. Instead, we become a member of a new community. We have new privileges and new burdens.

During the short week at Pavones, it allowed us to begin to know one another. We began to ask questions about the place of environmentalism in our lives, and how it relates to personal and community health. We all came together from our distant spheres of activity. We were unknown to each other but no longer are. We are now inside each other's histories. What will we make of that? What have we left behind in Pavones? We also became part of the lives of the people of Pavones.

The last evening before I departed the conference I was out surfing, watching the sun go down. There were just two of us to share the experience - Mark Renneker and me. I remarked to him that something magical was going on here at the conference. He didn't quite understand. What I meant was that there was a transformation occurring. The planet managers were becoming barefoot doctors and the doctors (and other SMA members) were becoming barefoot environmentalists. Indeed, it had happened to myself.

The highlight of the whole week for me was my opportunity to participate in the community health clinic. There I learned to use the David Werner system *Where There Is No Doctor*. I provided at



*Pavones sunset. Photo by Mark Renneker*

least four different patients with medical education. I then felt the confidence to proceed on my own in the developing world and make myself useful as a "barefoot doctor."

The day before the clinic we attended a seminar on "Healing the Humans" and the human environment. The conclusion was that one way of solving environmental problems was by unleashing the great human potential found in the developing world. But first it was necessary to improve the health of the people through the use of community health care workers or "Barefoot Doctors."

A new philosophy was also discovered: that a sick environment undermines the health of all of its inhabitants. A man arrived at the SMA Pavone clinic who provided a classic example of what we were grappling with. This man arrived on horseback with his wife and two small children. He had ridden for hours through the tropical heat and forests to get to Pavones to be seen in our clinic. It remained a mystery as to how he knew we were there, possibly the coconut telegraph.

Mark Renneker put the David Werner book in my hands and said, "Give it a go - use the book to help this man." I'd never done anything like this before — but I thought I'd try. The man complained of intestinal parasites in his family. He and his family were weak in body and spirit. I interviewed him and determined with the aid of the David Werner book that they were afflicted by round worms. The book gave the man information on how to use medicinal plants in curing the affliction. And it gave information on the causes (poor hygiene and sanitation), and how to prevent a recurrence. He was told how to improve his water supply, build a simple outhouse toilet, improve family hygiene and food handling and generally improve his immediate surrounding environment.

The man left leading his family proudly out the door. He was happy, strong in spirit and content in the knowledge that he had begun to control his own destiny.

I left the experience with an understanding of how global issues could be traced and examined all the way down to

the individual level. This man could now participate in a positive manner locally. He was ready to go on to wrestling with other problems. In his case, local deforestation and loss of biodiversity of his community.

Once again, many thanks to all the new friends I made at the SMA conference. Let the spirit of the earth inspire your work as planet managers and earth doctors. Be creative in solving environmental problems. Speak out with passion. Speak out with conviction. Baba Dioum said it best: "In the end we will conserve only what we love. We will love only what we understand and we will understand only what we are taught."

# THE MORRIS SAGA: AN UNHAPPY SIDESHOW TO THE COSTA RICA CONFERENCE

by Tony Peckham

Despite its ultimate success, the Costa Rica conference came very close to falling apart over the Christmas holidays. Here's what happened:

Soon after Journal #5 came out announcing the conference (late October), we received a call from Gary Lane of Morris Overseas Tours (MOT), a company specializing in surf trip packages to Costa Rica. He had heard about the conference and offered to help us. MOT turned out to be the lump of coal in our Christmas stockings.

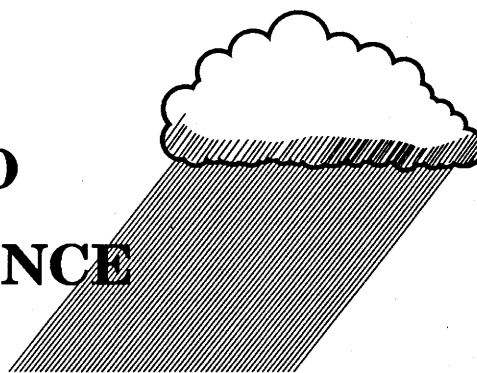
As you may recall from the last Journal, the Costa Rica conference was planned as a low-cost camping trip, that it would focus on coastal ecology, and the local arrangements would be via Mark Bracker (who has friend(s) down there). Mark was planning to go there himself, as a post-Xmas vacation, to make the arrangements. Still, after looking over MOT's glossy brochures and after discussion amongst ourselves (the organizing committee: myself, Mark Bracker, and Mark Renneker), we called Gary Lane in early December to see how and if MOT could help us.

Gary Lane immediately insisted that we had to overnight express to MOT a \$100 deposit per person (25 people=\$2500) to secure seats on LACSA (the Costa Rican airline). He said we ran a great risk of not getting onto the heavily-booked flights that time of year. Because of that sense of pressure and urgency, we immediately sent them an SMA check for \$2500 to hold the seats until the individual SMA members could get their payments in. [We later discovered that LACSA does not require deposits for that small a group and that they had an abundance of seats for those flights, even one month later. On checking later with LACSA, they had no record of MOT sending them our deposit.]

This began a series of false pressures and deadlines from MOT that culminated in an air-land proposal delivered just before

Christmas that was so outrageously expensive that some of our members decided to cancel. Everyone, including the organizing committee, was shocked and upset. What had been planned as a low-cost camping conference had become a super-expensive deluxe package tour, complete with Five-Star Hotels! We felt we were the victims of a bait-and-switch scheme.

We managed to save the conference by returning to our original plan of making our own travel arrangements



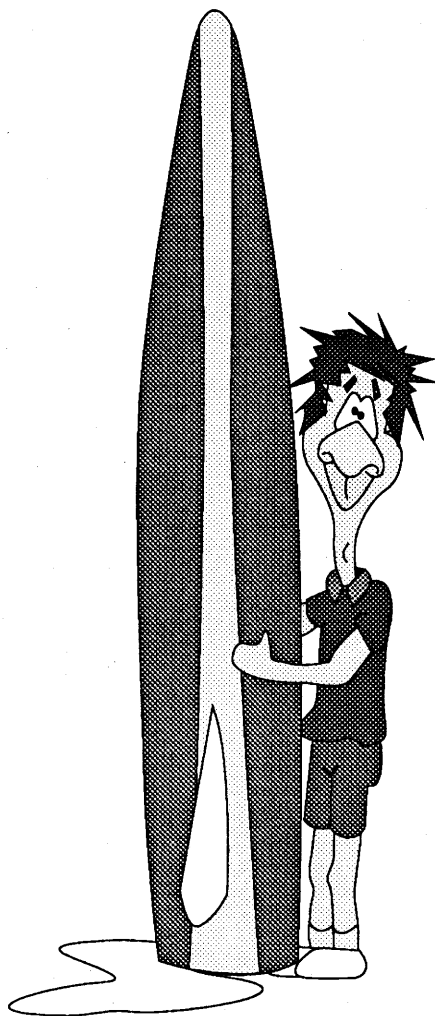
through Mark Bracker while he and his family were in Costa Rica after Christmas. Thanks to him, things worked out.

When MOT opened for business at the start of January (after being unavailable for almost two weeks over the holidays), we called Gary Lane to tell him that the proposed package would not work for us. Not only was he terminally unhelpful at that point, he also billed us for over \$2000 for what he said were additional deposits he had made (all without our knowledge or authorization). After consulting with SMA Life Member-lawyer Jack Attias, we terminated our short and unhappy relationship with Morris and requested that our \$2500 deposit be returned to us.

Morris replied by sending a letter to each of the Costa Rica conference members attacking the conference organizers, Mark Renneker in particular. As of the date of this publication, we have not been reimbursed and are exploring our options, including litigation. If anyone wants more detailed information about this sorry saga, contact us.

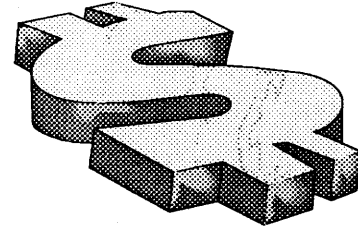
We feel that Morris Overseas Tours behaved in a dishonest and unprofessional manner and we urge all SMA members to have nothing to do with them. You may have noticed that MOT is now advertising tax-deductible continuing education surf-vacation packages in Costa Rica. We can't speak to the educational content of the packages, but in light of MOT's dealings with us, we caution everyone to check things out very carefully before signing on for such a trip.

The take-home lesson from all of this is that we will never again plan a conference without at least one member of the conference organizing committee having been to the conference site beforehand. This will eliminate a lot of guessing, bad information, and the necessity of trusting an organization like Morris Overseas Tours to make arrangements for us.



# THE TAXMAN COMETH

by Mark Renneker, M.D.



*It turns out that it's easy to become a non-profit corporation: you just fill in the blanks on some forms, list the names of who will be responsible, and then send it all in with a check for a couple of hundred dollars. Which is just what we did on February 29, 1988, with the help of SMA lawyer-member Hugh Greenup.*

*What's hard, though, is to then gain tax-exempt status. That took a full 18 months of bureaucratizing, this time with the help of SMA accountant-member Tom Kever.*

*It was evident from the beginning that the Internal Revenue Service was suspicious of us - our name (an oxymoron, "surfer" equaling frivolous and "medical" equaling serious), our literature (let's face it, we are a serious organization but we don't take ourselves seriously), and our conduct (having conferences in exotic locales around the world). But then there was our intent, and our deeds (which were undeniably positive and sincere).*

*They subjected us to close scrutiny, issuing various sets of questions on what they saw as potential areas for abuse of tax-exempt status. We came through it smelling like a rose, and on August 10, 1989, we were granted tax-exempt status.*

*In a way, we should be grateful for the process we were put through, because it definitely helped clarify what we are and what we are not.*

*In a nutshell, we are truly an association and our primary activities are devoted to that activity (i.e., associating).*

*We have gone on record as stating that we will not, for instance, develop some product (say, the SMA T-shirt), market it en masse to the public, and, in effect, become a business (and never have to pay tax). This is where other tax-exempt organizations go afoul of the Internal Revenue Service. We are going to operate to the letter of the law - if there's any possibility of an SMA member's activities putting the organization in jeopardy, don't do it!*

*What follows are the relevant sections of our petitions for tax-exempt status. I wrote them, and, as befits SMA policy, carefully ran them by other SMA members (particularly Tom Kever) before sending them in. If each SMA member will take the time to read the following, they will have a clearer understand-*

*ing of what the SMA is, what we can do, and what we cannot do. Contact SMA central if you have additional questions, comments, or would like a copy of the complete file.*

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[From letter dated July 1, 1989, to the Internal Revenue Service, regarding case number 958354021 (application for tax-exempt status)]:

"Your April 20th letter inquired as to why we feel our organization is more properly described as a charitable organization under Internal Revenue Code 501 (c) (3) rather than a professional association described under IRC 501 (c) (6). Our reply is as follows:

The Surfer's Medical Association was organized to function as a charitable, scientific, literary, and educational organization, open and available to all interested persons - professionals and non-professionals alike. Our mission statement, goals, activities, assets, and property are irrevocably dedicated to serve the public (in this case, targeting those members of the public involved with and concerned about surfing and related water-sports activities). Our amended Articles of Incorporation most clearly define our purposes [they were

enclosed]. Additionally, we offer the following information on our educational and charitable activities.

## 1. Educational/Literary

**A. "Dear Surf Docs"/*Surfer* magazine Consultations:** beginning about two years ago, the Surfer's Medical Association began running a monthly Dear Abby-like question and answer column in *Surfer* magazine. *Surfer* is the one major surfing magazine in the world, and through our column in the magazine we stand to reach all surfers. The purpose of the column is entirely educational. Sample columns are enclosed. You'll see that (1) the column is entirely the result of volunteer efforts on the part of our organization, (2) it serves a unique function, that of providing state-of-the-art medical information and health education to members of the public (surfers) who otherwise would not receive such specialized attention, and (3) payment for the column (about 20 cents a word, or about \$350 to \$500 per month) goes directly from *Surfer* magazine to our association. In addition, our association functions as the medical and health advisors to the magazine, consulting and writing other articles as needed - and, again, all royalty proceeds from those activities go directly to our association.



*It is very likely that learning takes place on waves like this. Western Australia. Photo by John Small*

**B. Journal/information newsletter:** "Surfing Medicine" is the name of our association's journal/newsletter. It is sent to all members of the association, as well as to key media and policy-level individuals in the sport of surfing. It is written to be of use to both non-health and health professionals. It provides a wealth of practical information on health and medical matters relating to surfing, aimed at educating surfers to take better care of themselves. Articles have appeared cautioning surfers about the use of alcohol, cigarette, and other drugs (constituting what is perhaps the only objective anti-drug campaign within the sport of surfing); also, there has been information on prevention of skin cancer, shark attacks, surfer's ear, wound care, travel health, and much more. There is no other publication like it; it represents a valuable educational resource for the surfing public.

**C. School, Surf Shop, and Contest Education Programs:** this has been more actively pursued by our Australian members, as part of an organized "Surf Survival" training program for Australian high-school students. We plan similar programs here in the U.S., through surf shops and schools, emphasizing CPR and water rescue training. Again, this will be entirely a volunteer effort. Also, our members regularly represent our organization at surf contests, providing free health information and screening. These services were (and will be) available to all interested members of the public.

**2. Scientific:** our association has not and does not envision conducting scientific research *per se*, except where it has direct application. For instance, our association sponsored a study on the effects of marijuana smoking in surfers in which the process of conducting the study was an educational process to surfers, and the data supported surfers' decision to stop marijuana use. Also, we conducted a health screening study of surfers that constituted the first clinical study of surfers (cataloguing the effects of surfing on their skin, ears, eyes, etc.), but the project was first and foremost educationally based - each of the examinations had an educational component. That is the kind of scientific and clinical studies we intend doing in the future.

**3. Charitable:** our most notable charitable activities have been in regard to our organization's work in the village of Nabila, in Fiji. For four consecutive years now, we have done extensive work in the village - providing health services and health education. This has included raising funds to construct a clean water system, participation in school classes and church education programs, village health worker training, providing dental and medical consultations, and the donation of hundreds of hours of medical manpower and medical supplies.

While it is true that our organization has united surfing health professionals, and that was one of our goals, it is not accurate to see our group as a "professional association." Our membership is composed of both professionals and non-professionals, people from all walks of life, of all ages - youngsters and oldsters. We are drawn together for the purpose of helping surfers to be healthier.

To summarize, we are a charitable and educational organization, rather than a professional association. If additional information should be necessary, please let us know."

[From letter dated February 11, 1989, to the Internal Revenue Service, in response to specific questions they posed to us.]

**Question #1 a.) Indicate the percentages of total time devoted to each activity conducted by your organization - include your surfing activities as an organization.**



*What percentage of time for surfing?  
Photo by John Small*

**b) Indicate the percentages of total revenue devoted to each activity conducted by your organization.**

Answer #1 (a. and b.):

Referring to Part III of our Application for Recognition of Exemption, Form 1028 (filed 10-1-88), ten ongoing projects were described. Those are the external activities of our organization. The percentages of total time and revenue devoted to those projects is outlined below, but only a minority of our total revenues goes towards supporting those activities. The majority of revenues goes towards internal activities, which we did not specifically list in our application (except as "expenses" in the spread sheets). Internal activities include those things done to manage and service our organization - such as:

(1) Responding to requests for information about our organization and how to join it (which involves the expense of designing, printing, and mailing pamphlets and other printed material, as well as making phone calls and sending letters).

(2) Providing all new members with orientation information (includes decal).

(3) Providing all members a twice yearly 30 to 60 page journal/newsletter/directory, (which involves the expense of writing, visuals, lay-out, printing, and mailing) as well as sending periodic notices regarding upcoming meetings, dues owed, etc.

(4) Responding to members' requests for information (by phone and mail).

(5) Maintaining membership information (i.e., enter into computer) and distributing membership information to the members (for planning regional meetings, etc.).

(6) Planning future meetings and new projects (by phone and mail).

While the above six activities are not inclusive, in our organization they account for about 75% of the total time, 80% of the revenues spent (i.e., expenses), and 50% of the total monies taken in (i.e., revenues earned). The remaining 25% of time and 50% of revenues earned goes to the ten projects listed in Part III of our

application. The breakdown of time and revenues devoted to each project is as follows:

1. Providing health education and screening clinics (time 2%; revenue spent 1%; revenue earned 0%).

2. Answering surfers' health questions in a "Dear Abby" like column in a surf magazine (time 5%; revenue spent 4%; revenue earned through payments from the magazine, 15%).

3. Organizing conferences on the medical aspects of surfing (time 10%; revenue spent 10%; revenue earned 33%).

4. Providing health care, education, and financial assistance to a 3rd world village in Fiji (time 5%; revenue spent 1%; revenue earned 0% - all monies and supplies donated by members).

5. Promoting surf survival and ocean rescue training in schools and surf shops (time 1%; revenue spent 1%; revenue earned 0%).

6. Conducting research on surfers' health problems (time 1%; revenue spent 1%; revenue earned (in grants to cover expenses) 1%).

7. Representing the sport of surfing in the field of sports medicine (time 1%; revenue spent 0%; revenue earned 0%).

8. Teaching physicians about the unique health problems of surfers (time 1%; revenue spent 0%; revenue earned 0%).

9. Publishing information for surfers on surfing safely (publishing articles in addition to the 'Surf Docs' column) (time 2%; revenue spent 1%; revenue earned 1%).

10. Evaluating surfing-related products for their safety value (time 1%; revenue spent 0%; revenue earned 0%).

As to the question of how much organizational time or resources is spent on surfing: zero. An interest in surfing is what forms the basis of this organization, but no organizational resources are used by any of our members to surf. This is not to say that at our beachside clinics or conferences, our members will not be going surfing - in fact, part of our teaching

surf safety and being role models to other surfers necessitates our going surfing - but in no circumstance will an activity or project be planned that is designed to just "go surfing."

To summarize, the majority of our organization's time (75%) and expenses (80%) is spent in servicing and maintaining our membership. However, only about 50% of the revenue earned is from members (as dues or contributions). The various external projects our organization is involved with account for a minority of time (25%) and expenses (20%), but because of the "Surf Doc" column and the conferences, a revenue that is about equal to that obtained from dues is obtained (50%) - allowing our organization to have a balanced budget. To put less pressure on each medical conference to provide significant revenue (and balance the budget), we have raised dues slightly and will be more aggressive in encouraging members to pay their dues on time and to upgrade their membership class (i.e., increase their contributions - because, as you will see in looking at our newest brochure, membership is a way of both joining and contributing).

Additional information: at present, the vast majority of the work is done by ten or so key volunteers. Some of the work is done by temporary secretaries, typists, data entry workers, teenage envelope stuffers, and the "fellow" (a limited-stipend position (of about \$250 to \$300 per month) for a medical student in which they help with processing membership and do a significant proportion of writing for the journal, "Surf Docs" column, and other articles). In the future, as the membership grows, we anticipate needing to hire a part-time secretary/manager.

**Question #2: You stated you will conduct research on surfer's health problems. What percentage of total time will be devoted to this activity. Complete Questionnaire R.**

Answer #2: As listed above in Answer #1, about 1% of our organization's total time will be spent on research on surfer's health problems. In answer to questionnaire R:

(a) nature of the research: our two research projects to date have been: (1) collecting data on surfer's health problems via a screening clinic (to be published in the Summer/Fall 1989 journal), and (2)



analyzing the sputum of marijuana-smoking surfers [the Winter/Spring 1989 journal, pages 17-21 were attached]. Both of these projects illustrate the type of research we intend to engage in: survey, epidemiologic kinds of studies.

(b) description of present or past projects: see (a) above.

(c) how and by whom were research projects determined and selected: both of the above projects came about through group discussions held at our annual meetings, where members identified areas of concern in which little information was available, and then brain-stormed about ways to obtain the information.

(d) information on sponsors or grantors: in the sputum study on marijuana-smoking surfers, LungCheck Inc. provided about \$500 to cover direct, out-of-pocket travel and communication expenses incurred by the fellow (Kevin Starr). They also provided the canisters, processed the specimens, and provided cytological readings and interpretations - but all of these expenses were absorbed within their operational budget. There was not a formal grant or contract for this research project. In the future, we do not anticipate research projects of such magnitude or cost that formal grants would be applied for. Wherever possible, we will try to conduct them within our own means - possibly with donated materials or expertise (as with the sputum study).

(e) disposition of research: see (a) above.

(f) ownership of patents, copyrights, etc.: by the nature of our research, that being survey research, we do not anticipate that patent or copyright issues will apply.

(g) copies of research: see (a) above, and attached Winter/Fall 1989 journal, pp. 17-21.

(h) research performed in connection with a hospital? No, nor do we anticipate it.

**Question #3: Describe in detail how you will promote surf survival and ocean rescue training in schools and surf shops. What type of schools will be your goal?**

Answer #3: Our work in this regard will be modelled after the work of the Surf Life Saving Association of Australia. They have developed and put into use in their nation's schools (7th thru 12th grades) a comprehensive education and training course (see attached samples from their program). Our hope is to bring such a similar program to this country, but we assess our country's attitude towards surfing as a major impediment. In Australia, surfing and beach sports are honored activities - their national surfing champions attain the rank and recognition of our baseball and football stars. That is not the case in the United States. While we would like to initiate a school-education program, we see that as a long-term goal. To get started, we hope to pilot an Australian-like surf survival program in surf shops (focusing on surf rescue and CPR). We chose surf shops because in our country they are our country's surf "clubs" for young surfers (whereas, virtually all coastal Australian schools have surf clubs). We hope to produce a short film or video that can be used in either surf shop trainings or schools that will introduce our organization and emphasize the idea of surfing safely and helping others.

**Question #4: Describe in detail how you will evaluate surfing related products for their safety value. To whom will you provide the results to and how?**

**WANT TO GO TO  
FIJI AND JAVA?  
SEE UPCOMING  
CONFERENCES,  
PAGE 44**

Answer #4: If you'll again look at the Winter/Fall 1989 journal, this time on page 26, you'll see precisely what we intend to do. We intend to function much as Consumer Reports does for the general public: independent, objective evaluations of surfing-related products as to their safety. We will publish these evaluations in our journal, and possibly in surfing magazines (i.e., as part of our "Surf Docs" column). The actual products may be purchased with organizational money (if of nominal cost), but that has yet to occur - so far, either the company sent our organization one of its products to evaluate or else one of our members purchased the product on their own.

**Question #5: Complete enclosed Questionnaires E, F, H, and L.**

Answer #5:

**Questionnaire E (Educational Activities)**

Our educational activities (for members, other health professionals, and the general public) have thus far been through conferences in which lectures and seminars were offered. While individual members may have been on radio or television, or been in newspapers or magazines, and spoken about our organization, these weren't planned or developed by our organization (and involved no resources of our organization). [Attached was the announcement for our October, 1987, conference on The Medical Aspects of Surfing, held on the North Shore of Hawaii, as an example of the sliding-scale admission fees we charged.]

No speakers have received honorarium or had their travel expenses paid for by the organization, with the exception of the 1986 and 1987 conferences held in Tavarua, Fiji. (The 1st and 2nd International Medical Conference on the Sport of Surfing - which were, in effect, our annual meetings), in which one person each year was invited to be our key-note speaker and received a discount of about \$250 on their accommodations to offset their expenses (otherwise both people couldn't have come due to their limited finances).

Our organization does not pay for its members to attend its meetings. Nor do we hold regular "Board" meetings as do most other organizations. We schedule our organizational meetings to take place at our medical conferences.

When a member takes on the responsibility of organizing and coordinating a conference, every effort is made to cover their travel and accommodations in "comp" kinds of arrangements. For instance, an airline will supply one free ticket if our organization books a certain number of tickets with them, and that ticket will be used by the conference coordinator; or most resorts will provide a free room to our organization in exchange for the conference being booked with them, and that room will be used by the conference coordinator(s). At least, that's what we try to bargain for. Also, there are expenses incurred by conference coordinators in planning a conference which will be covered by our organization, but these are considered in the total expenses for the conference.

For those unable to pay to attend our meetings (or, for that matter, to join our organization), every effort has been made to allow them to attend or join anyway. We have a number of "freebie" members, most of them students, who we are happy to have as members (as "Join Now, Pay Later members"). The exception is at our Tavarua, Fiji meetings, where there is a limit of 24 people who can stay on the island - and, for the meeting to not operate at deficit, virtually every spot must be taken by a paying member. In the future, we hope to find a different site in Fiji to hold our meetings that would allow more members to attend. At a meeting for the general public, like our meeting on the North Shore of Oahu in October, 1987, no problem - all were welcome.

**Questionnaire F: the answer to all six questions is NO [these six questions regarded officers and directors receiving monies from the organization in the form of loans, grants, gifts, dividends, leases, etc.]**

**Questionnaire H:**

1. The only publishing activities our organization will engage in is to provide a journal to its members. Non-members may purchase the journal at a price which will cover the cost of printing and mailing it. Our organization has grown to the extent where it would be a cost-saving to purchase our own desktop publishing equipment (computer, programs, laser printer), rather than have to pay outside people to do the job. When we have the funds, we would hope to make those purchases.



Individual members have published books on their own on matters relating to surfing safely and surf medicine, but this was within the scope of their individual professional interests and did not involve expenses for or revenues to our organization. Our organization has decided to not engage in for-profit activities, such as publishing - but it does encourage members to do so - because more publications on the subject of surfing medicine are needed. However, they must entirely shoulder the financial risk. In no circumstance will the money of the organization be used to support their venture.

A project underway since 1986, actually from before the organization was ever formed (and which provided the nucleus of people and interest that led to the creation of the organization) has been the writing of "The Handbook of Surf Medicine," to which about thirty members of the organization have contributed sections, and which is being edited by two of the principal officers of our organization, Mark Renneker and Geoff Booth. The editors have used their own money for the book, and intend to self-publish it. Obviously, the book will to a large extent represent the views and goals of our organization, and the editors have pledged a percentage of profits from the book to the organization, but no organizational money will be used to produce or publish the book.

2. Merchandise sales: again, our organization does not intend to engage in any for-profit merchandise sales with the exception of those items provided for sale to members (or those interested in our organization) such as T-shirts, wall diplomas, and decals. We will not be marketing anything to the general public.

3. Sale of services: NO.

#### Questionnaire L:

1. Our plans are to not make gifts or grants to other organizations.

2. Nor, will we make gifts or grants to tax-exempt groups.

3. We will not make gifts or grants to individuals. The exception may be in our having a "fellowship." This is not an official academic fellowship, but is really a way to hire a part-time worker for the organization. The actual activities of the fellow are more like that of a secretary, but we've used the title "fellow" to dignify the position and make it more palatable on their resume as to what they were spending their time doing. The way in which the "fellow" is chosen depends on what work needs to be done, and who is available. Thus far it has been only one individual, Kevin Starr, who during his 3rd and 4th year of medical school did a great deal of the work on the "Surf Docs" column, handled memberships, and helped organize conferences. His total remuneration was \$1050 - and half of that was for his expenses (i.e, buying a computer so he could do the writing required of him by the organization). Now that Kevin has completed medical school, we're hopeful that another interested medical student will appear and want the job - but there is no one on the horizon as of now. (If two such students should appear, the job would be given to that person who had the most time remaining in their training and/or was willing to take on the most work; the decision as to who to hire would be made by convening three principal members of

the organization and having them decide). Our "fellowship," then, is hardly what could be considered an actual grant or gift - it's just a "job" - and so Form 1023B does not apply. If, however, you feel it does - please let us know and we will gladly complete it and clarify the situation.

4. No gifts or grants will be made to members or our organization.

5. No gifts or grants will be made to our organization's officers, directors, or trustees (or their families).

#### Question #6: Provide your employer identification number:

Answer #6: #94-3078625 (Date of notice: 11/1/88)

I hope this provides the necessary information for your agency to evaluate our application. I realize that you must receive applications from some pretty off-the-wall sounding organizations, and that the fact that we are concerned with "surfing" may, at first glance, put us in that category. But, despite the fact that we obviously take pleasure in doing this kind of work, and that our methods involve the use of humor, I hope you can see that we are really very serious about our work.

Sincerely,

Mark Renneker, M.D.,  
for the Surfer's Medical Association

**SMA "STUFF"**  
**-FOR MEMBERS ONLY-**  
**T-SHIRTS, DECALS, WALL CERTIFICATES,**  
**THE COLLECTED SURF MEDICINE WORKS**  
*see Updates and Back Cover for Ordering Information*

# ORIGINAL ARTICLES

## SKIN CANCER, UV, AND OZONE DEPLETION

by Simon Leslie, M.B.  
Stanwell Park, New South Wales

[First presented at the 4th Annual SMA Conference, Western Australia, July 1, 1989]

This review aims to give an overview of the physics of ultraviolet radiation and ozone depletion. This should allow an understanding of the relationship of these factors to potential future increases in the incidence of cutaneous malignant melanoma (CMM), basal cell carcinoma (BCC) and squamous cell carcinoma (SCC). It concludes with a list of recommendations for surfers to lessen their risk of skin cancer. Information for this review has been derived from a report prepared for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (1) which examined the relationship between ultraviolet radiation (UVR) and CMM, and from a review of the same topic by J. Longstreth published in "Cancer and Metastasis Reviews." (2)

### THE PROBLEM

CMM incidence has been increasing at a rate of approximately 4% per year over the past 15 years in the USA irrespective of any change in atmospheric ozone. By the year 2000, it is expected that the lifetime risk for an individual for CMM will be 1 in 150. [Editor: In May 1990, Drs. Riger, Kopf, and Friedman, from New York University, who first made these year 2000 predictions, issued revised estimates. Calling their first estimate "too conservative," based on a 94% increase in cases from 1980 to 1989, they now predict that by the year 2000, 1 in 90 Americans will develop melanoma during their lifetime.] Epidemiological data points to an association between CMM, BCC and SCC incidence and UVR exposure. It can be reasonably estimated that each 1% depletion in ozone levels will produce an additional increase of 1%-2% in CMM



*Putting on your zinc oxide and getting checkups by a dermatologist isn't the solution. Patrick being examined by Richard Underwood, M.D., Pavones, Costa Rica. Photo by Mark Renneker*

incidence. Global production of chlorinated fluorocarbons (CFCs), which have an atmospheric lifetime of up to 110 years, is increasing in line with global economic growth. The potential depletion of stratospheric ozone by CFCs and the subsequent adverse effect on human health via increased UVR exposure is of real concern.

### OZONE

Ozone production and depletion are normally closely balanced such that mean stratospheric ozone levels vary little around a mean value. Ozone is formed by the photodissociation of oxygen and high energy UVC in the stratosphere to produce free oxygen atoms which then bind to O<sub>2</sub> forming O<sub>3</sub>. CFCs deplete ozone by accumulating in the upper troposphere and eventually crossing into the stratosphere where photodissociation releases chlorine. The chlorine then enters a catalytic reaction on the surface of ice crystals that destroys ozone, adversely affecting the normal balance.

### ULTRAVIOLET RADIATION

Solar electromagnetic radiation reaching the earth arrives as a spectrum of varying wavelengths from the short wavelengths of UVR through visible light to infra-red and radiowaves. By far the greatest amount of energy reaching the earth's surface is in the form of visible light. UVR is divided by convention into UV-C (all UVR below 295 nanometres wavelength), UV-B (295-320 nm) and UV-A (320-400 nm). Not all UVR reaches the earth's surface. The atmosphere — principally the stratospheric ozone layer — absorbs UVR with maximal absorption of shorter wavelengths. Thus all UV-C is absorbed before reaching the Earth's surface, about 50% of UV-B of 320nm and virtually no UV-A. It is estimated that with a 20% reduction in ozone concentration there will be approximately twice the amount of UV-B reaching the earth's surface with little increase in UV-A. As ozone is such an efficient absorber of short wavelength UVR, UV-C will still be completely screened. Air broken off from the chlorine-rich and ozone-depleted zone or "ozone hole" over Antarctica, has already been detected over southern Australia and New Zealand with levels of depletion in the order of 15-20% (3).

### THE SKIN AND ULTRAVIOLET RADIATION

Cells in the lower skin layer (basal layer of the dermis) are partly protected from UVR by the presence of two UV absorbers in the skin, melanin and keratin. Following a single UVR exposure, tanning occurs within 10 hours and is maximal by one week. Melanin is transferred from melanocytes within melanosomes to the keratinocytes which are eventually shed as the tan is lost. UVR also induces the activity of greater numbers of melanocytes in the skin. Epidermal (surface skin) mitosis (cell division) increases leading to a 1.5 - 3.0 fold increase in epidermal thickness with a proportional increase in keratin within one to three weeks. UV-B is the more potent inducer of both tanning and increased skin thickness. In light-skinned individuals, skin

thickening provides more protection than tanning.

UVR is presumed to be carcinogenic by reason of its ability to penetrate to the basal layers of the deeper skin layer (the dermis), damage cells' DNA and possibly depress immune surveillance. UV-B is more biologically effective in this regard than UV-A, perhaps 100 to 1000 times more so. The amount of radiant energy reaching the basal layers of the dermis (the biologically effective dose) and the temporal manner in which it is delivered are thought to be the major determinants of risk of developing cutaneous malignancy. The risk of SCCs and BCCs appears to be directly related to the cumulative dose of UVR over time, whereas the risk of CMM seems to depend on high-level, intermittent exposures particularly at the time of adolescence, and also on the presence of precursor lesions such as dysplastic nevi.

### PHYSICAL FACTORS AFFECTING UV EXPOSURE AND THEIR RELEVANCE TO EPIDEMIOLOGICAL STUDIES

The amount of ambient UVR at the earth's surface is determined by the distance that solar radiation has to travel through the atmosphere, by the degree of cloud cover, and by surface reflectivity (albedo). Thus, UVR levels are higher in summer, in the middle of the day, at lower latitudes and at lower altitudes. As the atmosphere screens UV-B more effectively than UV-A, variations in these factors produce greater changes in UV-B than UV-A. For example, in Washington D.C., UV-B at 295nm is 60 times more intense in July than in January, whereas UV-A at 335nm is only 3 times as intense. Similarly UV-B will increase by a factor of 2500 from 5:00 am to 12:00 noon with UV-A increasing only 20 fold. At 70 degrees latitude UV-A is 60% of levels at the equator whereas UV-B at 300nm is less than 1% of equatorial values. At 4000 metres above San Francisco, UV-B increases by a factor of 1.35 whereas UV-A is virtually unchanged. 100% cloud cover can cut both UV-A and UV-B levels by 60%. Changes in surface albedo (e.g. increases in the reflectivity of sand and water) produce only small increases in ambient UVR levels, more so in the UV-A range.

These numerous confounding variables which determine the biologically

effective dose, make the design of epidemiological studies very difficult. Most studies use the potential exposure dose (the total amount of UVR occurring during the sunlit hours at the subjects' normal site of exposure) or an estimate of the actual exposure dose (the fraction of the potential exposure dose delivered to the skin as determined by clothing and behaviour patterns) as correlates of UVR exposure. As the natural skin color, skin thickness and degree of tanning can influence the biologically effective dose, studies that do not use estimates of the biologically effective dose as the measure of UVR exposure can suffer from uncontrolled variability in results.

Knowledge of the larger variance in UV-B ambience and the greater biological effectiveness of UV-B can explain why a surfer who spends 28 hours a week in the sun but only in the early mornings and late afternoons, can be at less risk of skin cancer than an office worker who spends four hours a week sunbaking in the middle of the day. In addition, a surfer who attains his tan during the early spring months when the relative proportion of UV-B/UV-A is low may be at less risk than the person who attains a similar tan during the summer months or while on vacation.

### AVOIDING SKIN CANCER

Following from an awareness of ultraviolet radiation physics it is possible to draw up a list of common sense guidelines to help the surfer minimize his risk of developing skin cancer and solar eye damage.

1. Do not allow yourself to develop sunburn. It can take less than fifteen minutes to burn.
2. Be extra careful surfing in the tropics.
3. Surf in the early morning or late afternoon.
4. Go without a tan.
5. Wear approved sunglasses and a hat with a wide brim (in the surf, consider wearing a helmet!)
6. Wear clothes that cover your skin when in the sun.
7. Always wear maximal protection sunscreen and plenty of rubber and lycra.
8. Watch for any changes in your moles and report any skin abnormalities to your doctor.

9. If you don't do the above, plan on retiring from surfing by the year 2000.
10. Campaign to preserve the earth.

To those who feel unable to comply with all of the above, be sensible and comply with as many as possible.

### Notes:

1. US Environmental Protection Agency: *Ultraviolet Radiation and Melanoma with a Special Focus on Assessing the Risks of Stratospheric Ozone Depletion*. In: Longstreth JD (ed) Government Printing Office 1987.
2. Longstreth, J. *Cutaneous Malignant Melanoma and Ultraviolet Radiation: a Review*. *Cancer and Metastasis Reviews* 7:321-333 (1988).
3. Bell, A. *Ozone Hole: A New Twist*. *Ecos* 59, 1989. p. 29

## HEADING THE NEW WAVE

by Jim Bradley,  
Warilla, New South Wales

[First presented at the 4th Annual SMA Conference, Western Australia, June 25, 1989]

The phenomenon of wearing surf helmets has all happened in under three years. Xmas '87 was the big breakthrough, when Tom Carroll and Robbie Page took a giant step in the challenge towards safer surfing in the potentially lethal waves of Hawaii's Pipeline. They each wore a RADHAT - a surfing helmet developed by the writer here in Australia. As we all know, Tom went on to a memorable victory, emerging from some of the heaviest tubes seen in years, wearing his white "protector."

From that point in time, RADHATS and, most recently, other helmets, have become common out in the lineup, at reef locations around the world. Helmets are now regularly used by other world class surfers: Mark Richards, Damien Hardman, Barton Lynch, Garry Elkington, Jenny Gill, Wendy Botha, Pauline Mentzer, Rabbit Bartholemew, Simon Law, Dave Macauley, Justin Cook, Mitch Thorsen and Hawaii's Bruce Hansel, just to name a few.

The concept first became public across Australia late in '87, when TRACKS carried my article titled, "A Hard Headed Approach to Surf Safety." In brief, the article outlined the dramatic safety advantages of wearing a well-designed surfing helmet and, at the time of writing, that there were no commercially made ones available.

Surfing helmets offer five major safety advantages: (1) they provide the "normal" helmet function of protecting the head from sudden impact, such as with the sea bottom or with one's board on wiping out.

(2) They offer a platform for attaching a soft beak thus providing shade protection for the eyes, nose and lips... a feature that in time will become more important as the lack of ozone increasingly makes prolonged exposure to the sun lethal.

(3) With ear overlays, the wearing of such helmets helps prevent surfers from developing "surfers ear." This is a condition which can result in infections and deafness, caused by the formation of bony growths in the ear canal called exostoses. The growths are thought to be triggered by cold, that is by either cold water or wind, or both, entering the ear over prolonged periods. An effective prevention may be to keep the ear warm.

The extent of surfers ear problems being experienced by water sports persons, i.e., surfers, board sailers, wave ski riders, is quite sobering. Many surfers over the age of 25 have 50-80% closure in each ear. At the Second International Surfers Medical Association Conference, held at Tavarua, Fiji, in June '87, all present were checked and all except one had between 30-100% closure in 1 or both ears. The SMA subsequently endorsed



The Gath Hat. Western Australia.  
Photo by Geoff Booth

the wearing and development of suitable surf helmets.

(4) RADHATS protect the ear against PERCUSSION from the violent contact with the wave face which occurs on wiping out. In Tom Carroll's case this has resulted in a ruptured ear drum before he took to wearing the RADHAT.

(5) RADHATS accommodate the wearing of 'blade-type' sunglasses. This obviously gives UV protection to the eyes and protects them better from blunt trauma.

As a consequence of the photos in the surfing magazines, as well as movie footage such as in Performers II, showing Tom Carroll in a RADHAT, much discussion has taken place at all levels of surfing. The writer has sold over 200 RADHATS, all sales coming via "word of mouth," from as far away as California.

Apart from the above mentioned safety advantages there is one other potential bonus for those who choose to wear a helmet. Helmets are perfect platforms for wearing FM and AM radios. The writer has been using radios in his helmets for just over 2 years and they work fine with the earphones being held in place by the ear overlays of the helmet.

Throw in the use of a beach transmitter which enables a competition surfer to be given CLEAR instructions by a coach on shore who has a better view of the approaching swell, and you really do start to enter a new dimension. As anyone can appreciate, this will give a dramatic advantage to any competition surfer wearing a helmet fitted with the receiver.

To those that might think this development will give helmeted surfers a real edge, it will. But some surfers have been given visual signals from their coach on shore for years — the radio will simply give that sort of information far more accurately and quicker.

Over recent months Tom Barton and Glen Winton, apart from many others, have all ordered transmitters with the obvious view to trying them out — not necessarily in contests but as a training aid, the main use up till now. Just how they stand up to Hawaiian conditions is yet to be proved, but with big money resting on simply catching that one better wave, which often determines a man-on-man heat, it is certain they will be carefully considered.

Purely from a coaching point of view, any surfer, from novice to world

champion, can be given immediate advice without having to return to shore, as they do at present. They have been used extensively over past months by coaches such as Chris Byrne at the Wollongong Academy of Sport, as well as with Australian School Surfing Association coaches Evan Jeffrey (at Pittwater High) and Steve Thomson (Merrimac High Q).

But what of the future? Will RADHATS just become an aberration that are only useful at Pipeline, as has been suggested by some? Well, I will bet anyone that helmets are here to stay, and in an increasingly big way. It all comes down to individual choice. If there is some aspect of your surfing health about which you are concerned, and a helmet is available, then it is up to you, isn't it? You choose what you want with all your surfing equipment — why shouldn't you give a little more thought to the most vulnerable and important part of your body, your head?

Sailboarders and wave ski riders, along with our Pipeline friends, are increasingly using helmets. And, as we all know, the sun is going to become surfers' biggest curse over the next few years.

As commercial surf helmets, such as Ric Gath's GATHHAT, hit the shops, the main debate will swing from that of "no-one will wear them" to one of aesthetics (style) versus function (effectiveness). The balance between these two considerations must, in the author's opinion, be always function first and style second. The major problem confronting potential surf helmet manufacturers, as with all helmet manufacturers, is: "How do you make it look like a slight increase in head size while keeping its protection factor very high?"

For additional information contact Jim Bradley at (042) 37-7297 or 56-1888, or write to P.O. Box 131, Warilla, New South Wales, 2528, Australia.



Rad-hatted SMA members Michael Kliks (left), Jim Bradley (center), and Geoff Booth (right). Photo by M.R.

# LETTERS

## AMPUTATED BUT NOT CUT-OFF

by John Przybyszewski  
Ontario, Canada

After I lost my leg to cancer in 1980, there were many things I thought I would not be able to do. Surfing was definitely one of those things.

One year after my operation, I learned how to downhill ski and three years later I was instructing other amputees how to ski. I made the junior football team in high school as a place kicker. My record was 0-2 and each time I kicked the ball right at the snapper's head. So I wasn't very good but, heck, I made the team and it felt pretty good. A couple of years ago I picked up a copy of *Surfer* magazine and read through it. This is the first time I saw the Surf Doc column and was quite surprised to learn that there were so many ailments and injuries related to surfing. My mind began to wander towards how I could learn to stand up surf. I got some ideas and sketched them on a piece of paper and sent it with a letter to the Surf Docs figuring I had nothing to lose.

I sent the letter in the spring and got a reply in the middle of summer. I was totally blown away because although I was hoping for a reply, I really thought I wouldn't get one. I was told that the SMA really liked my idea and were going to help. It was like a dream coming true, I was going to be able to learn how to surf. My hopes were really getting too high and I was expecting everything to be given to me on a silver platter. The SMA then sent me a letter, bringing me back to reality, that basically gave me the steps to learn how to stand up surf. I realized that was all they could do and they were very helpful but I guess I wanted more. It would be a big decision to pack up, leave school and move to California for a while so I wanted to make sure it was worthwhile. I decided to go to San Francisco and meet with the SMA and basically see what I was up against. If I could handle myself in the waves to a certain level then I would consider going for it, but if I did poorly then I would forget it all together.

I met with Dr. Mark Renneker of the



*John paddling out on his Stewart, prosthesis in place. Photo per John*

SMA and George Orbelian, surfboard design editor for *Surfer* magazine.. They were very helpful and cooperative and made me feel welcome in these new surroundings. I really did not know what to expect but what I discovered is that there are still people out there who care and are concerned about people and are willing to help them. Both George and Mark convinced me that this project would be worthwhile. Even Bob Wise of San Francisco's Wise Surfboards donated a bodyboard so that I would have something to learn the waves with while designing the leg and board. Although I was in San Francisco less than a week, I felt very confident that I could learn to stand up surf. The flight back to Toronto was filled with anxiety to tell everyone back home how things went.

Concentrating on school was a little difficult with surfing now constantly on my mind. A month or so later, my original letter was published in *Surfer* magazine with the response. I guess I was pretty proud of that because I showed it to practically everyone. A few weeks later I received a call from Kevin Starr of the SMA telling me that my letter had gotten a big response from the readers. People wrote in with positive responses from all over North America. However, two

people wrote who were of special interest to me. Ted Greene, president of the United States Manufacturing Company, wrote and said that they were willing to supply me with any prosthetic materials I needed. This was very good considering they are the largest manufacturers of prosthetics and orthotics in the U.S. Also, a prosthetist who surfs and lives in LA, said he would be very willing to help me develop the leg. Things started to look really good and I decided to take a semester off school in the winter and move down to Southern California.

There were many things that had to be done before going down. Finding a place to stay, either renting or leasing a car, trying to get a green card so I could make some money. Since I was basically going down with money I saved and what my parents had given me, I was concerned with things such as rent, food, gas, as well as wet suits, surfboards etc. One solution to this problem was getting some form of funding or sponsorship. I worked on a formal proposal and began to contact prospective companies and agencies in Canada. No one seemed interested which was very discouraging and in a way embarrassing. I spent over two weeks on the phone trying to get a hold of these people but all I got was a lot of excuses

and phone numbers of other government agencies I could try. It seemed everyone needed a proposal which had to be approved by one committee which would then go to another committee for discussion. An average lag time of 6 - 12 months. I really didn't have this time to wait around and find out.

After weeks of discouragement, I decided to call some surf companies in the U.S. I made one call to Scott Daley of Body Glove and basically explained why I was coming down and looking for some sponsorship for wetsuits and stuff. So when I asked if Body Glove would be interested in helping he said, "Sure!" I couldn't believe it, that was so easy. I immediately called Preston Murray of Quiksilver and got the same result. Things started looking really good and I was very excited about the whole trip.

However things didn't go all that smoothly before I left. The prosthetist from LA told me he was moving to the east coast in the spring. He said he would help me find a place to stay and work on the leg until he left. Well, when I arrived in LA I called him from my hotel and I think he was quite shocked to hear from me. He basically told me he tried to find a place for me but was unsuccessful and he also told me that he was too busy to help me with the project. He even added that he was surprised that I came down even though I notified him weeks ahead of time. I now had no place to stay, and no one to help with the construction of the leg. Since I knew no one in LA I felt a little scared. I went to Arizona for a week and visited friends and tried to find a place to stay.

I ended up staying in Vista, California living out of cupboard shelves and sleeping under a stairwell on a boxspring. Although cramped and uncomfortable, it was close to the beach and the rent was cheap. Once settled in I would spend the next week or two commuting the two hours to LA to meet with the companies that were helping me out. I was still in need of a prosthetist that would be willing to help and had surf experience so that the prototype was made effectively. I contacted who else but, Vista Orthotics and Prosthetics. I met Bob Sorenson who's been surfing for about 25 years and was very interested in my project. Bob was the "MacGyver" of the project, and deserves most of the credit for its success.

Now that everything was coming together on the land, it was time to get into the ocean and work on the surfing.



*Up and riding. Success! Photo per John*

Since I have never surfed before, paddling out was very tiresome because those muscles around the shoulders had never been used in that motion. Although I am a good swimmer and can usually swim long distances, I found paddling took away most of my energy. I was learning about tides and waves using my bodyboard so that I could begin to learn things such as judgment. I discovered that there is more to surfing than just the technique, there are so many factors involved that make it so unique. In skiing the hill never changes or closes out on you; basically you can have the same experience each time you go down. Surfing is totally different because the wave is never the same, especially in a beach break. I discovered that the tide makes all the difference and I began to time the sets so that I could paddle out without getting totally thrashed. Each day I went out I learned something new. Someone told me that you always keep learning new things no matter how long you have surfed. However, I had to learn as much as I could before my money ran out and I'd be forced to go back to Canada.

Bill Stewart of Stewart Surfboards in San Clemente, loaned me his 9 foot board and would later custom make me an 8'6" board. Bill and all his staff made me feel welcome and helped me out any way that they could. Paddling a long board was a lot easier than the bodyboard and I could see that overall I was getting stronger in the water. When Bob finished making the first prototype we went straight to the ocean to try it out. It was very awkward at first because it was restricting and water would leak into the socket where my stump was. It took a couple of days to get used to it. Bob would come out with me early on Sunday mornings to one of

the beaches in Carsbad or Oceanside and we would work on standing up while riding the white water. Within a week I was stand up surfing, although looking like a total spaz with my arms waving all over the place, I was still stoked by that experience.

Surf Doc, Mark Renneker was right when he told me that there would be high frustration levels and the whole stand up surf style would be clumsy. However, I did my best and each day in the surf was more of an accomplishment than anything else. As far as my surf style it is not perfected let alone mimicable, but stand up surfing is what I always wanted to do and now I'm proud to say that I can do it. I was able to progress to the point where I could surf waves under 4' in control. Unfortunately, the money ran out and I had to pack up and go back to Toronto. I would have liked to stay the summer in Southern California and keep progressing but I never got a green card and I was already in too much debt.

Now that I'm back home, I really miss surfing a lot. Both my surfboard and bodyboard are collecting dust in the corner of my room. I am definitely hooked on the sport and keep thinking of different methods and techniques I can do to improve my surfing. Although I will be skiing this winter, if I had a choice between the two, surfing would be the definite choice. I have re-applied for my green card and hope to work somewhere close to the surf, maybe for a sports company. I know my chances are slim but I'm always dreaming.

There are many people that I would really like to thank that deserve a lot of credit for making my dream come true. To: Mark Renneker and Kevin Starr of the SMA, George Orbelian and his family,

Bob Sorenson and all his staff at Vista Orthotics and Prosthetics, Ted Greene, president of United States Manufacturing Company, Scott Daley and Robbie Meistrell of Body Glove, Preston Murray of Quiksilver, Jody Kirk of *Surfer Magazine*, Bill Stewart of Stewart Surfboards, Bob Wise of Wise Surfboards, Van Phillips of Flex-Foot Inc., all the surfers of the Carlsbad and Oceanside area who were friendly and patient with my inexperience, to the pods of dolphins that scared the shit out of me the first time I saw them and made me feel welcome in the ocean and thanks to everyone else who made it easier for me to stay down there.

Although I was probably Vista's customer of the year, I have no regrets going down to do the project because I learned such a great deal about everything and have gained some good friends out of the whole experience. I've been working and going to school and hope to save enough money for another trip down for a week or two of surfing. I think I have successfully proven that someone with a disability is not restricted and that anything can be achieved if the desire and effort is there. If what I have done has enlightened at least one person, then I'm satisfied.

## READY TO SURF

by Geno Hopkins,  
Salinas, California

Dear SMA,

My name is Geno. About one year ago I wrote a letter to "Surf Docs" telling how much I enjoy the sport of surfing. However, there's a problem: I'm handicapped. I have a disease called Arthrogriposis. It affects my arms and legs which makes it impossible for me to surf in the upright position. However, I've been out on a board with a friend, laying on my stomach.

The point is, I want desperately someday, someday soon, to body board on my own with a special board designed to keep me from falling off. I can swim, it's just hard to get back on the board.

A week or two after I wrote the letter, Jodi Kirk at *Surfer Magazine* called me at home and said that she had read my letter and was interested in helping me. I then met with Mark Renneker, Kevin Starr and George Orbelian, all part of the SMA — all really neat people to work with. We sat and talked for quite some time, brainstorming ideas on how to custom design a wetsuit and body board.

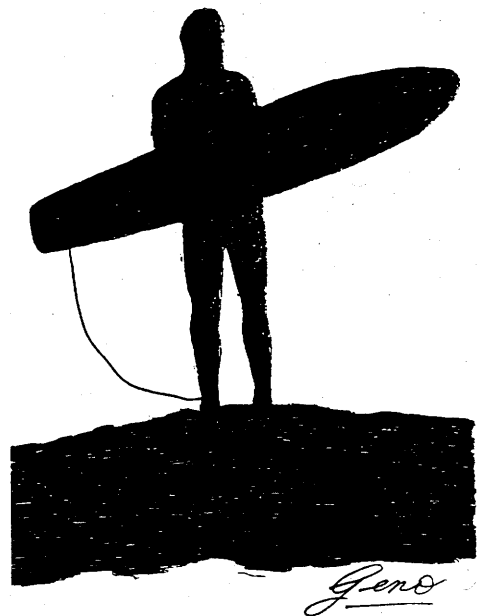
The wetsuit is completed and believe me when I say "It's Too Cool!"

In order for the board to be designed and completed, I need to spend more time in the water working with a traditional board to determine the necessary modifications.

The purpose of this letter is that I don't drive. It's nearly impossible for me to get to the beach as often as I'd like, therefore I'm looking for another member of SMA or other surfers who live in or near Salinas, California, who wouldn't mind picking me up on their way to the beach.

If any of the SMA members are interested in a new surfing buddy, I would love to hit the waves with them. My telephone number is (408) 753-2854.

Radical regards,  
Geno Hopkins



## SCOTTISH MATH LESSON #2

by Andy Bennetts,  
Haddington East, Scotland

Dear SMA,

Thanks for printing my letter, but your editorial comment deserves a reply, which I hope you will also publish. There are, as you know, lies, damned lies, and statistics. Before jumping to conclusions, the full facts should be known.

I said in my letter that there had been no positive drug tests before or since the contest at which we had problems, so before slagging off my mathematics, you should qualify your statement. You do of course need to know the total number of tests that have been conducted before you can draw any conclusions.

The total number of drug tests conducted in the three years since the scheme was introduced is 32. Of that, 4 were positive. By my calculations, that's 12.5%, falling within my proposed 10 to 15% as outlined in my letter.

Incidentally, the International Surfing Association has adopted similar rules, and I believe the Japanese at the forthcoming World Amateur Contest are going to be strict and supportive of those rules.

Finally, I don't know if you have gone any further with the thought of having an SMA conference here in Northern Scotland, but I have had a talk to a few people here, and there may be the



possibility of limited financial help if you wanted to come. I'm not talking of a lot of money, but every little bit helps - all you have to do is pass a dope test!

Keep on Surfin',  
Andy Bennetts,  
of the Scottish Surfing Federation

[Editor: Last September, I spent two incredible weeks in Northern Scotland. Andy and I didn't manage to connect up, but I did closely investigate the town of Thurso as a possible site for a future SMA conference. Salient features: you can surf all night long in summer, the Gulf Stream warms the water to about 60 degrees (summer and early fall) but the air temperatures can be quite cold even in summer, the coast and countryside are exceedingly beautiful, there are virtually no surfers, and there are incredible waves.

I found a world-class left point on a part of the coast that Andy said is never surfed (and wasn't mentioned in the issue of the Surf Report he wrote on Scotland). It was headhigh to double-overhead, wind-protected, and I

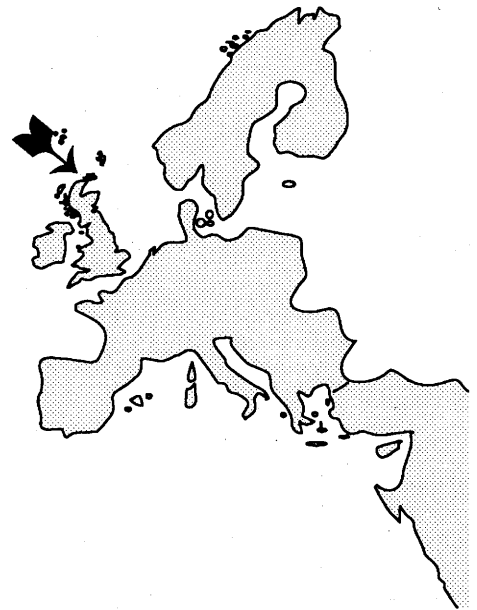
timed one of my rides at 50 seconds. Believe it or not, it reminded me of Tavarua. To get to it was a half-an-hour hike over the moors, through the lovely purple-flower heather.

In nearby Thurso, the only major town on the north coast, we could stay in any variety of lodgings (hotels, bed-and-breakfast, etc.). And, in Thurso is a spot called "Castle Reef," which is described as being the second best wave in Europe (after Mundacca, Spain). It did look pretty good, but as you can guess, I spent my time elsewhere.

If we have an SMA conference there, my thought would be to have it for about one week - and then go to Biarritz, France, and Mundacca, Spain for a second week. A good subject for the conference would be ocean pollution. Thurso has a classic nuclear reactor nearby, allegedly spewing plutonium into the sea. And we've all heard about the abuses in the North Sea.

If, say, twenty people responded positively to the idea (please write), we could see about putting it together. I did enough of the local groundwork to know that it can be done, and we'd have Andy as our point man. Best

time of year would be September, perhaps in 1992.



Surf discovery, Northern Scotland. Photo by Mark Renneker.



# A NATURAL EXPERIMENT: THE FIRST DEAR SURF DOCS COLUMNS

by Mark Renneker, M.D.  
and Kevin Starr, M.D.

The SMA-*Dear Surf Docs* column in *Surfer* magazine (listed as "Health Center") began with Volume 29, #2 (February 1988) and has been a regular feature since. It began with an open invitation for surfers to write to us with their health and fitness questions, and guaranteed that all letters would be answered (with the best ones published, anonymously). We were deluged with letters, until finally we had to make a statement that replies would be limited to those letters published. From then on we seemed to get a different kind of letter, more writerly, often quirky, asking for help with uncommon problems (thus hoping we would publish it).

Realizing that to that point we had effectively conducted a natural experiment on what health problems most commonly concern surfers, we went back and analyzed those first letters, identifying and tabulating the major problem in each letter.

The analysis appears below. It is based on a time period of twenty consecutive columns (February 1988 to September 1989), and all letters received during that time period (totalling 130 letters).

## TOPIC— NUMBER OF LETTERS

surfer's ear - 13  
back - 13  
- injury/pain (8)  
- disc/surgery (5)  
shoulder - 11  
- overuse (6)  
- dislocation/separation (5)  
knee - 8  
skin/skin cancer - 8  
- sun protection/sunscreen (4)  
- skin cancer (3)  
- melanoma (1)  
skin infections - 5  
cold water - 5  
- cold urticaria/angioedema (2)  
- hypothermia (1)  
- effects in general (2)  
hip - 5  
feet - 4 (bunion, pain, ulcer, swim fins)  
eye/vision - 3

eye/problems - 3  
sharks - 3  
wetsuit allergy - 3  
ear trauma - 2  
elbow/tendonitis - 3  
fractures (other than above) - 2 (rib, leg)  
physical conditioning - 3  
first aid kit - 2  
malaria - 2  
seizures - 2  
rheumatoid arthritis - 2  
handicapped surfer - 2  
pollution - 2  
anxiety/depression - 2  
amputation - 2 (fingers, leg)  
nasal - 2 (sinusitis, Pott's puffy tumor)  
renal dialysis - 1  
allergy - 1  
travel hygiene - 1  
spontaneous pneumothorax - 1  
neuropathy - 1  
nerve injury - 1  
inguinal hernia - 1  
tinnitus - 1  
muscle cramps - 1  
torn Achilles tendon - 1  
chronic pain syndrome - 1  
asthma - 1  
fiberglass/shaping hazards - 1  
esophagitis - 1  
post-operative recovery - 1  
rehabilitation - 1  
carpal tunnel syndrome - 1  
peeing in wetsuit - 1  
shitting in water - 1  
trauma - 1 (contusion)  
birth control - 1  
surf knots - 1  
parents - 1

Total: 130

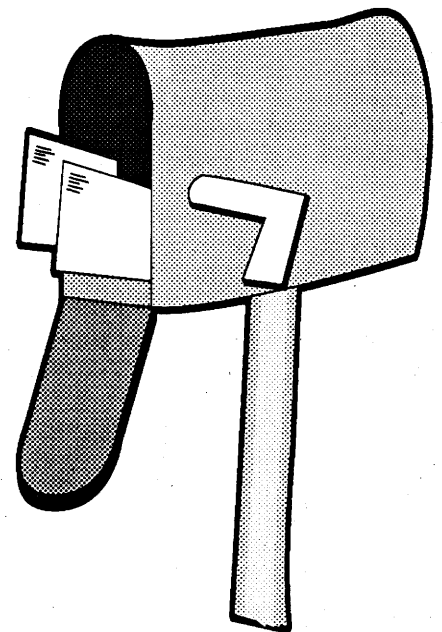
## COMMENT:

As you can see, the top three topics of concern (and therefore, the top three health problems that surfers are concerned enough to write in about) are: surfer's ear 13 (10%), back 13 (10%), and shoulder 11 (8%).

Geoff Booth conducted a similar analysis of the letters he received in the years he wrote the Dr. Geoff column for

*Tracks* in Australia (to be published in a later Journal). His results are very different than ours, perhaps attributable to the editorial differences between *Tracks* and *Surfer* magazine. *Tracks* has always been a far more liberal, free-speaking publication ("cocks and cunts" and "f" words in every issue); whereas, *Surfer* has always been more conservative, and less free-speaking (try to find the word penis or vagina, ever; and the word "fuck" has only recently graced their pages). For instance, the number one topic of interest in Dr. Geoff's column is "genitals" (10% of 481 letters), and in *Dear Surf Docs* the closest thing to "genitals" was one letter on peeing in a wetsuit (less than 1% of 130 letters).

True, American and Australian cultures differ - which can be interpreted in various ways. One of the other differences would be that from the beginning Dr. Geoff only answered those replies he published, which would be a challenge to letter writers to be more provocative if they hoped to get a reply. At a later date we intend to analyze the trend in Surf Doc letters from before and after our publication-only answer policy.



# ANATOMY OF THE SURF DOCS

by Mark Renneker, M.D.

*Not all SMA members regularly read Surfer magazine, so, from now on, each issue of the Journal will include reprints of interim Surf Doc letters. We do this because these question-answer columns are, in effect, defining the field of surf medicine.*

*As boastful as that sounds, it is a statement that stands up when you consider the wide variety of consultants and sources we use in developing material for each column. Furthermore, the advice and ideas contained in each column is under scrutiny by all surfers, and the feedback we receive (what worked, what didn't work) further refines our clinical approaches. It is a self-improving, self-correcting process.*

*As an example of how we approach writing the column, consider one of the letters we've reproduced below: the case of a surfer who developed yersinia enterocolitis, possibly as a result of surfing in sewage-contaminated water. To solve this case, we first read on yersinia in standard medical texts (found little useful information), then consulted environmental and pollution publications (again, of little use), discussed the case with SMA member-industrial hygiene consultant Greg Raymond (very helpful), set SMA member-public health consultant Craig Wilson to work researching the literature (again, very helpful), talked with coastal ecology groups, did a "60 Minutes" investigation starting with the local city manager then moving on to the county health department, and culminated with phone discussions with bacteriologic experts on the East Coast.*

*We began with little, and ended with a lot. We'd like to be sure all SMA members can share in that process, whether as occasional consultants or by reading the end-product.*

*Read, too, in the Updates section on the proposed "Collected Surf Works - Vol. 2" which will consist of a handsomely bound, indexed collection of all of the Dr. Geoff and Dear Surf Doc columns. It will be an offering to only SMA members.*

*Also, this is a good time to put out an open invitation to any member who would like to sign on as a consultant for the Dear Surf Docs column. The deal with Surfer magazine*

*is that we will once yearly have the option of making up a new boiler-plate that lists consulting members.*

*In the beginning, we mistakingly listed members with each letter they consulted on, which meant that the letter writer could track down the consultant and pester them for more information, want to be their patient, or, conceivably, sue them. In any event, it was not the best way to develop an independent, objective group of consultants. It was too much for Surfer magazine to make up a new list of consultants for each issue, so that's when we went to the boiler-plate idea.*

*The number of consulting members already exceeds the amount of room we have to list them, and so, in the future, we will list only those members who have been regular and reliable consultants (some of them have flaked-out on us - you know who you are!). And we will list new consultants.*

*We would like to hear from SMA members who want to be consultants to the column. We're looking for members willing to answer an average of one letter a month.*

*Please send us a letter within the next month saying you'd like to be a consultant, and list your areas of expertise. If there are less than two spelling and grammatical errors, you're in.*

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Column#1 (From Surfer Magazine, Volume 31, Number 10, October, 1990)

Dear Surf Docs,

I'm 25 years old and have been surfing for 8 years. I surf in Northern California, in the Pacifica area.

Last January, I began having abdominal cramps, diarrhea, loss of appetite, and weakness, which continued off-and-on for months, and which my doctor could not diagnose. One day, while surfing, I saw a large clump of what appeared to be sewage floating in the water. I went to my doctor and asked him if my disease could be related to surfing in sewage-contaminated water.

He did a special stool test which

showed that I had yersinia enterocolitis - which he said is an unusual infection of the intestines. He then knew which antibiotic to treat me with - something called Septra@ - and it quickly cleared up.

My doctor thinks it's possible that I got the infection from surfing in polluted water. What do you think? Is there any way to prevent this from happening again?

Rick,  
San Bruno, Ca.

Dear Rick,

Yersinia enterocolitis is, as you unfortunately now realize, a weirdo disease. The symptoms are as you describe, though sometimes there is also vomiting, fever, joint pain, and strange patches on the skin. The diagnosis is rarely made outright, it's so uncommon that most doctors don't think to test for it (it requires special staining and culturing procedures of stool specimens). It is, as in your case, a diagnosis usually made weeks or months down the road, often by accident.

It's hard to say whether or not you got it from shit in the water, but, for sure, you got it from shit somewhere - that's the only way it's known to be passed on. It's what doctors call the "fecal-oral" route: exposure to food or water contaminated by the feces of an infected person or animal. With yersinia, man is thought to be an accidental "host" (victim). Yersinia is an animal lover - it takes to an animal's gut the way condo developers take to Southern California. It prefers dogs, cats, pigs, and various wild animals.

If your symptoms had begun shortly after you saw the scum in the water, and if other surfers had come down with it about when you did, then you could make a strong case for having acquired it from the scum. It appears, though, that your symptoms began before you saw the scum, and, to your knowledge, other surfers weren't affected, which argues against the yersinia coming from ocean-borne contamination.

However, it is possible that there was a low-level of contamination all along,

and that, for one reason or another, you were the only surfer infected (perhaps related to how often you surf or how often you wipe out, i.e., how much sea water you swallow). Another factor which makes it possible that the ocean water was contaminated with yersinia is that, unlike most other bacteria, it thrives in cold temperatures. Also, you got sick during rainy season, when more waste runs into the ocean.

Another ingredient to the puzzle is urban runoff - the water that runs off the streets. During storms, large amounts of urban runoff are discharged. At present, urban runoff receives no sewage treatment, isn't usually monitored, and would be a possible source of yersinia (and other infectious agents) considering the huge amounts of pet and animal feces on city streets and sidewalks.

*Yersinia enterocolitica* is a bacteria similar to the one that caused the Black Death in the Middle-ages (the plague). Are we seeing the beginning of a Brown Death epidemic, from sewage being poured in the ocean (if not from yersinia, then from one of the many other known microorganisms that can cause disease in man)? It sure seems so, but governmental agencies generally say "no," that current sewage treatment methods eliminate such organisms, and that sufficient monitoring is done to insure our health.

It's hard to believe such claims. It isn't as though they're lying, it's just that sewage monitoring doesn't tell you everything. Most sewage monitoring only involves "coliform counts," a crude measurement of a class of bacteria (coliforms) that are not generally a health problem. If the coliform count is high it means that more shit is in the water than usual - but it doesn't tell you what's in the shit. A better sewage monitoring system is being introduced around the country (not yet in California), which theoretically will give a better indication as to whether or not human infection-causing bacteria are present in the ocean. It won't tell you anything about yersinia though.

*Yersinia* and other potentially disease-causing bacteria (of which there is a fairly long list) are never routinely tested for. It turns out that it is very difficult to do bacteria studies on sea-water, due to its high salt content. Finding out whether or not a virus, like hepatitis, is present in the ocean is even harder.

Definite proof of the presence of a disease-causing organism requires

actually recovering it. As we have explained above, though, this is not easy to do for ocean-borne infections. We called various county and private laboratories to see if they would test sea-water samples. The San Francisco County Health Department (Environmental/Water Quality Office) will do coliform counts, but say they don't have the capability to test for yersinia, and certainly not for a virus like hepatitis.

Private medical labs will do routine bacteria cultures, if you have a physician order the test, for about \$30 to 40 per sample. Their testing system will not usually pick up yersinia or vibrio (another major class of ocean-borne bacteria associated with human infection), and it won't tell you anything about hepatitis.

In your case, Rick, you should take sea-water samples to the lab that diagnosed you, because they obviously are capable of detecting yersinia. Also, test the stools of any pets you have.

There is a unique lab in Newark, Delaware (Microbial I.D., Inc., (302) 737-4297 that can do highly sophisticated, fatty-acid comparison studies on bacteria to link an infection in a person to an organism in the environment. (\$45 per sample). It turns out that if something like this gets into court, it can be claimed there are so many different strains (types) of, for instance, yersinia, that finding it both in the ocean and a sick person is not sufficient proof (i.e., it's not enough to say that a blue 1975 Ford Fairlane was involved in a crash, you have to prove it was the same color blue by a paint analysis).

This is the kind of crap facing coastal-environmental groups who are trying to clean up the ocean. Short of mass epidemics, proof of sewage-dumping causing disease is very difficult. But in every situation where it appears to be the case, we surfers should do what we can. If you see what you think is untreated or undertreated sewage or pollution at your surf-spot, call the county health department and ask for assistance. If nothing else, coliform counts can be done - which may tell you if you're on the right track. Then you can consider additional testing, for instance the Delaware lab mentioned above.

There is something of an upside to the downside of ocean waste dumping in Pacifica. Linda Mar, one of the most heavily surfed beaches in Pacifica, has a urban runoff storm drain alongside its main beach parking lot with a locals-

favoring feature. A bell sounds before the gates open and the runoff is discharged onto the beach to run down into the ocean. Locals have learned to not leave their towels or beach stuff anywhere near the drain, and take fiendish pleasure in hearing the bell sound and watching non-locals' stuff get swamped.

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Column #2 (from *Surfer*, Volume 31, Number 9, September 1990)

### Malaria Update - 1990

Talk about a scary disease - malaria ranks right up there with cancer and AIDS. Its incidence is fast on the rise (there are presently over 400 million cases and 2 to 3 million deaths each year), and it continues to outwit the best of scientists by developing immunity (what is known as drug resistance) to practically every drug thrown at it.

Recommendations are continually changing for travelers going to parts of the world that have malaria. What we told *Surfer* readers in the July 1990 issue (Vol. 31, #7) is already out-of-date. The Centers for Disease Control has just issued new guidelines. Here's the latest, as it applies to traveling surfers:

- Chloroquine (Aralen®) is OUT, unless you're going to malaria-areas in Mexico, Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Costa Rica, Haiti, Dominican Republic, Panama (west of the Canal), Egypt, or Saudi Arabia, which are all places where chloroquine still works. Chloroquine needs to be taken weekly, starting two weeks before leaving and continued for four weeks after returning. Its minor side effects of upset stomach, headache, dizziness, blurred vision, and itching will be minimized if you take it with meals and split the dose and take it twice a week.

- Pyrimethamine/sulfadoxine (Fansidar®) is OUT. This was the standby drug previously recommended to take along with you if you were going to a chloroquine-resistant area. If you developed a high-fever or flu-like illness, you were supposed to pop three Fansidar. That used to work, but not any more: a group of travelers just recently died from Fansidar-resistant malaria! In a few short months, Fansidar resistance has spread through Thailand, Burma, Cambodia, parts of sub-Saharan Africa, and the Amazon basin. Indonesia - and its many choice surf spots - are probably going to

be next on the list (as will the rest of what is called Oceania). If you're planning an Indo trip, don't rely on Fansidar.

- Mefloquine (Lariam®) is IN. This is a new, but old, drug, recently approved by the U.S. Federal Drug Administration. In the Second World War, as the U.S. was losing more soldiers in the South Pacific to malaria than to the Japanese, Army scientists were frantic to find a drug to treat and prevent malaria. They looked at mefloquine, but discarded it in favor of chloroquine. Now that chloroquine is less than optimal, mefloquine has been resurrected. The dosing for mefloquine is more complicated than for chloroquine. Take one tablet of mefloquine one week before arrival in a malaria-area, then take it weekly for three weeks (which equals a total of four doses: the one dose the week before, then three more). Thereafter, take it once every other week, with your last dose coming after leaving the malaria-area.

Mefloquine has minimal side-effects (brief stomach upset and dizziness), and is thought to be safe at the recommended dosage for prevention (but when used at higher doses for the treatment of malaria, it sometimes has radical heart and nervous system side-effects). The truth is, though, that it is not a very well-studied drug. On the other hand, malaria is a

well-studied disease, and what we know now, in 1990, is that we are losing the war against it.

Don't be a casualty out of ignorance or attitude. You should still take protective measures to reduce contact with mosquitos (see Surfer Tip #219, "Malaria and Surfing," and Vol. 30, #3), but that isn't enough - you need to take the pills, too. It's healthy to be suspicious of taking pills and to be leary of the medical profession when they're blabbering to you about a drug that isn't well-studied, but, unfortunately, there isn't yet a good alternative. Furthermore, don't assume your average G.P. is going to know about these recommendations - physician education isn't as instantaneous as you'd hope. For any questions, call the Center for Disease Control "Malaria Hotline" (404) 332-4555.

[July update: the drug company distributing mefloquine in the U.S., Roche Pharmaceuticals, evidently mispackaged the drug when they first distributed it in March 1990, and had to recall it. As of July 1990, though, it is readily available. If need be, request a pharmacy to have it drop-shipped by Roche (800 526-0625).

## SURF DOC FAN MAIL

Dear Surfer magazine,

*The Surfing Docs rate three big cheers for the last contribution on ocean-born diseases. Once again they're leading the way with medical knowledge, and bringing to a head the way water pollution will do us all in. AND...these guys won't bill us for their good advice.. Keep up the Surf Docs column...the space you give them may save a life.*

Peter Dixon

Malibu (where the sewage meets the sea)  
7-25-90

Dear Surf Docs Editors,

*Just wanted to say that I've been really enjoying your column in the magazine. Passed along the malaria update to a travel agent friend who said it was better info than she'd seen in a long while. Moreover, the most recent column (letter to the Pacifica surfer) concerning coastal water pollution is superb. Well-written and comprehensive—I learned a hell of a lot. Keep up the good work.*

Sincerely,

Allston James  
Senior Contributing Editor  
Surfer Magazine  
7-23-90

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# UPCOMING CONFERENCES

## TODOS SANTOS ISLAND, BAJA CALIFORNIA DECEMBER 7-9, 1990

I first heard about Todos Santos in 1963, in junior high school wood shop, from a kid who told me about going there on a surf-trip in a sea-plane (it turned out to have been organized by surf-book author Peter Dixon, now an SMA member). He said that there were waves that broke all the way around the island! I never forgot that.

In the late 1970s, I began going there on a regular basis, finding it easy to hire a day-boat out of Ensenada for the 11-mile



Killer's, Todos Santos. Photo by Mark Renneker

ride out to the islands. There were fantastic waves, including one classic right pointbreak that was ultra-hollow and reminded me of El Capitan in Santa Barbara (see photo). The surf world remained ignorant of the place until movies and magazines re-discovered it as a "secret spot" in the early 80s, calling it "El Martillo" (Spanish for "the hammer," an approximation of the left-right spot on the north tip of the south island, named "Thor's Hammer").

Finally, in the late 80s the place emerged as "Todos Santos - the biggest surf on the West Coast" (we chuckle about that claim here in San Francisco).

The Lighthouse which sits on the north point of the north island, in front of the best break ("Killers") has been turned into a surf camp, and a company named "Island Tours" has been set up to run it. It turns out that SMA-San Diego member Mark Bracker is friends with one of the Island Tour owners... (deju vu for those who went on the SMA Costa Rica trip).

Mark is willing to coordinate a trip there for the SMA in early December, over a Friday - Sunday, tentatively set for December 7-9. We will have the entire camp to ourselves (capacity of about 15), but be aware that other surfers will be boating in if there is a good swell. The cost for the boat-trip out and back, and food and accommodations will be \$200, plus a \$125 conference fee to the SMA.

The theme for the meeting will be "Marine Wilderness Surf Medicine," with Mark and willing members providing seminars. Members would meet on Friday morning at the Ensenada Harbor to boat out, and return Sunday afternoon. If coming from out of town, Mark has offered to put you up at his place in San Diego, and help you down and back from Ensenada.

The surf can get quite large, so members should bring two boards (including a gun). Also, Killers is a killer break - be in shape, and know your skill-level. The water temp should be in the mid- to upper 50s. Days and nights can be cold, so dress warm. Food and accommodations will be provided by the camp.

If you want to go, call (after 7 p.m.) or write Mark Bracker at (619) 270-7569, 5334 Westknoll Dr, San Diego, CA 92109. Send him a check for \$325 per person, made out to the SMA. Sign-ups should be by Oct. 1st; no refunds after Nov. 1st. —M.R.

## TAVARUA, FIJI MARCH 16-30, 1991

There was such demand for slots for the July 1990 SMA Tavarua conference that it was only logical to schedule a second conference for as soon as possible.

Last March is when we scored the greatest surf ever at Tavarua, and we're hoping for a repeat next March.

The theme of the conference is not yet set, but will most likely be a combination of "Making Yourself Useful in the 3rd World" (i.e., Nabila Village Project, Part III) and "Tropical Ecology" (i.e., Where There is No Environmentalist, Part II). Or it may be a new theme, based on emerging interests. It will not be the annual SMA conference; that will be in Java later in the year (see below). For anyone wanting more information on Tavarua and the SMA's work there, re-read Issue #5 of the Journal.

Again, unless Tavarua raises its rates, figure about \$110 per day per person and \$175 per day for couples, plus a \$250 conference fee per person attending. You're welcome to call now with questions or to put your name on a list of those who want to go, but that will not secure your spot.

In the interest of fairness (i.e., to let everyone have time to hear about the trip—some of the Australian members won't get their journals until three weeks after the American members) and to conserve SMA administrative time, we will be following a slightly different enrollment procedure this year: the quasi-Ticketron, Rolling Stones concert method. Namely, the SMA will be accepting deposits (the \$250 conference



*Thor's Hammer, a left and a right. Todos Santos Islands, Baja California. Photo by Mark Renneker*

fee) as of Monday, October 1st, 1990. Mark your calendar, plan to mail it at the appropriate time, and as a back up, consider faxing (415 664-1148) us on that day with a copy of your check. —M.R.

## GRAJAGAN, JAVA SEPTEMBER, 1991

This will be the SMA's Annual meeting, and the first SMA meeting to be held in Indonesia. SMA member Bill Heick has offered to do the groundwork for us this summer. We intend to reserve the entire surf camp at Grajagan for the SMA for a two-week period in September (final dates won't be known until this fall). Normally, up to 30 to 40 surfers can be there at any one time. We will have less than that, more like 20. It will be a chance to have Grajagan all to ourselves.

The theme will be "Surf Camp Medicine." The goal of the conference will be to establish an ongoing clinic at the

camp. This will involve delineating the minor and major surfing-related problems that typically occur at a surf camp, developing treatment protocols, and training local camp employees in those protocols.

We will actually build and equip a clinic there, so we will need construction-minded individuals in addition to medicos. And we will need various medical supplies (and a plan to ensure the stocks are maintained).

Grajagan is not a light-weight place. To get there, you need to first fly to Denpasar Airport, Bali (easy and cheap from Australia, about \$1000 from the U.S., on Continental Airlines, direct from the West Coast), then take a ten or so hour bus ride, and a one to two hour boat ride. Grajagan (actually, its name is Plengkun) is in a nature preserve, with jaguars who roam the beaches at night, and malaria aplenty. It is one of the finest waves in the world - some say the finest - a long hollow left over a sometimes shallow reef. The nearest major medical facility is about

twelve hours away. There have been a number of major injuries there, plus numerous tropical diseases. A full-on surf camp clinic will be a major contribution to Grajagan and the surfing world!

The cost for the conference has not yet been determined. It will depend on what Bill Heick can negotiate for us. It should be considerably less than what Tavarua costs. The SMA conference fee hasn't yet been determined - it may be slightly higher than usual depending on the planning and clinic-building costs, but figure on about \$300 per person.

To get on the list of those who want to go and who will be sent additional information as it becomes available, send a letter to SMA Central. The next Journal will have more details. —M.R.



Indonesia. Photo by Mark Bracker

# UPDATES

## ULA GONE, ENTER MADAME X

Ula McClelland, our journal design and production kahuna over the past two years, has finally finished high school, and is heading off for Cornell University. We express mucho thanks to her (and her father, Don) for helping us put out the past journals! Mysteriously though, a "Madame X" has appeared, ready to take on the same responsibilities. Tony Peckham is still checking out her credentials, but says she apparently comes from a good family.

## THE GRAND TOTAL

We hope all of you received the SMA membership directory, which was mailed out on June 8th (if not, let us know). One important fact not in the directory is that, as of April 1st, 1990, the total number of dues-paying SMA members was 548. As of July 1, we topped 600. Also, not mentioned in the directory was that the cover boy is Dana Point ER doc John Millard, and, yes, that is a real tattoo (photo by Mark Renneker).

## CRAMBO

The SMA is proud to announce its first Nobel Prize winning member: Dr. Donald Cram, Ph.D., from UCLA, who won the 1987 Nobel Prize for Chemistry.

You may remember what fun the press had with the fact that Donald is proud of being a longtime surfer and member of the San Onofre Surf Club, and that his surf buddies call him "Crambo."

He started surfing in the late 1950s, and despite pushing past 70 years old, he is still at it! In an interview with the LA Times he spoke of the burden of having won the Nobel Prize because it cut-down on his surf time. On the subject of surfing he said: "It's been my salvation." About surfers, he said: "The image of surfers has matured. For my money, it's getting a lot better and that sort of implies it might have been otherwise, earlier. In my mind, surfers have always been great."

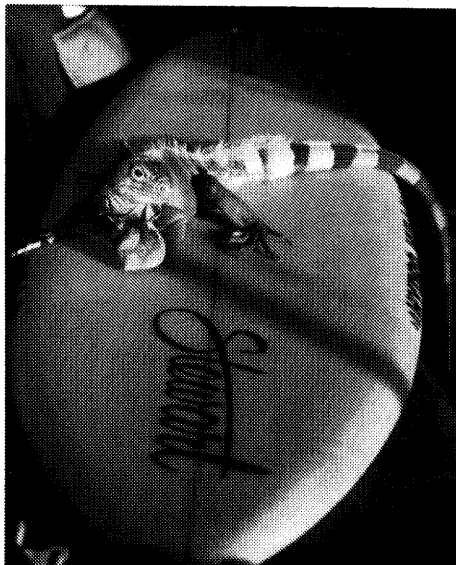
And as a life philosophy, he said: "Stay a little bit ahead of the whitewater." Welcome, Crambo!

## KAHUNA—NEWSWEEK

Did you catch the brief piece in Newsweek on August 28, 1989 (page 8), that spoke of "An Invasion of Yuppie Kahunas." It read: "West Coast surfing, once only for the young and funky, had become a major preoccupation of corporate types - bankers, lawyers, executive vice-presidents. Sometimes whole groups of lawyers from a single firm invade at once. These would-be kahunas show up with all the newest and most expensive gear, but, according to members of the surfing fraternity, few skills and no sense of etiquette. They are said to not know how to call a wave and don't understand right of way or lane claim."

## DR. TOMAS IGUANA RANCH

One spin-off of the SMA Costa Rica conference is the Dr. Tomas Iguana Ranch. Thomas Yarema, an ER doc from San Diego, came away from the conference with a plan to start an iguana ranch near Pavones as a means of repopulating iguanas, and protecting and increasing rainforest. He has already established a non-profit corporation around the project and is seeking support. You can reach him at P.O. Box 371801, San Diego, Ca. 92137. (619) 225-0339.



Next thing you know, there'll be iguana surf camps. Fluffy on his Stewart. Photo by Mark Renneker

## CAPTAIN ECOLOGY

SMA member Bill Maher, a surfer-dentist in Lower Township, New Jersey, has donned the persona of "Captain Ecology" as a way of eco-educating his community. Classic!



Captain Ecology. Photo by Maher

## SPINAL CORD PREVENTION

Ronald Gilbert has recently joined the SMA, and as the Chair of the Foundation for Spinal Cord Injury Prevention, he would appreciate hearing from members with similar interests. Write him c/o 1555 Penobscot Bldg., Detroit, Michigan, 48226. (313) 963-1600 or (800) 342-0330.

## SMA FAX NUMBER

Yes, Mildred, the SMA has a fax: (415) 664-1148. And, don't forget that the SMA phone number is now (415) 566-4687.

## THE LOW DOWN FROM LOWDON

Brian Lowdon requests that SMA members be forewarned that there are only a few remaining copies for sale of *Competitive Surfing: A Dedicated Approach*, that he and his wife published in 1988. There is even a chapter by Dr. Geoff on medical problems and surfing. It is a fantastic book, and if you don't have it, get it! Order through your local surfshop, bookstore, or from SMA member Bank Wright (PO Box 126, Redondo Beach, CA 90277).

## PRODUCT TESTING

The SMA has taken on the "Consumer Reports" task of objectively and independently evaluating health-related surfing products. In the next issue of the Journal we will be evaluating surf helmets, in-water sunglasses, and paper dots which monitor your sun exposure.

## FEEDBACK ON POSTAGE INCREASE

Last issue we asked for feedback on whether non-USA members should pay an extra \$10 with their membership dues to help defray the higher postage costs of SMA mailings to them. The feedback was unanimous (including many foreign members, notably one Brazilian member): yes, do it. It is done. The bill is in the mail.

## SMA STUFF: T-SHIRTS

Rym Partridge has set the SMA up with a new stock of SMA T-shirts. They were previously only available at SMA conferences, but now they can be ordered by mail. The catch is that you have to do most of the work. Send a stamped, self-addressed envelope (one shirt will fit into a 9 X 12 in. envelope, and weighs about 8 ounces). Medium, Large, and Extra Large are available. \$15.00 each. Checks to the SMA.

## MORE SMA STUFF: DECALS

Rym Partridge also has set the SMA up with a new stock of decals. The decals are now on a white mylar background that is thicker and easier to apply. Send \$2.00 per decal. Again, include a

stamped, self-addressed envelope. In order not to have to fold them, make it at least a 7 x 10 in. envelope. They weigh about one-half ounce each.

## COLLECTED SURF MEDICINE WORKS: VOLUME ONE, TWO, AND THREE

Want to become an instant expert on surf medicine? It has come time for all SMA members to have common access to the world literature on surfing and health: *The Collected Surf Medicine Works*, Volumes 1, 2, and 3.

Over the past years, the SMA has been collecting every conceivable medical and scientific article on surf medicine. Computer literature searches on this subject yield next to nothing. The bulk of the pieces came from SMA members, many from esoteric foreign publications, many unpublished.

As a means of giving all SMA members a common data base, these many articles have been assembled by Mark Renneker into a series of three volumes, indexed, and the SMA is prepared to have them printed and nicely bound in 3-ring binders. With *Collected Surf Medicine Works* in gold lettering on the spine, these books will look utterly distinguished on the shelf in your office or home. The works span five decades and number over two hundred articles.

Due to copyright restrictions, the volumes can only be purchased by SMA members. The material in these volumes is for the educational and informational use of SMA members only. Consider them as a supplement to the Journal. Proceeds will cover the cost of printing, and the balance of funds will go to the SMA.

Volume One will consist of the world's published medical and scientific literature on surf medicine; Volume Two will be the complete collection of surf magazine health articles, consisting primarily of the Dear Surf Docs columns (from *Surfer* magazine) and the Dr. Geoff columns (from *Tracks*), as well as other surf magazine articles related to health and medicine; Volume Three will consist of unpublished, some still-in-draft, articles, the majority of which were written by SMA members for the Handbook of Surf Medicine. Volume Three will, in effect, be the "underground" edition of the Handbook, the members' first draft, available now to the general membership for discussion, corrections,

and additions. [Volume Three will automatically be sent to those who contributed articles to the Handbook and to SMA members who originally ordered the book].

Each volume will be alphabetically organized and indexed. Together, the three volumes will be a powerful consultation and education tool for virtually any surfing-related medical problem.

Each volume will weigh about two pounds, and number about 300 pages. They will not be uniformly typeset, but consist of the best copies we could obtain of the original articles.

To order, send \$35.00 per volume, plus \$2.40 postage (first class), \$18.00 foreign (if airmail) or as appropriate (calculate seairmail for two pounds per volume). **Or, order all three volumes for \$100 and the SMA will throw in the postage for free (if U.S.).**

Make out the check to the SMA. Consider it a professional expense and a way of contributing to the SMA. This will be a limited printing, so order yours now. They will be mailed in time for Christmas.

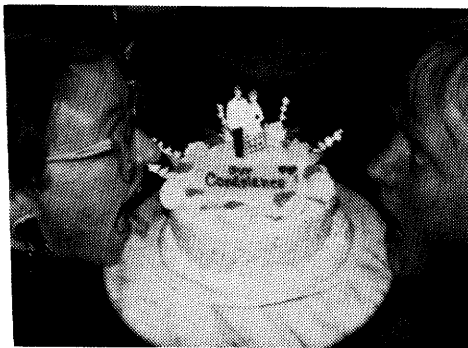
## REQUESTS FOR FEEDBACK— LIFE MEMBERSHIP

There are now over 60 Life Members, which means that each of those people paid a one-time membership fee of \$250 and will receive all SMA mailings ad infinitum. Life Membership was a great way for the organization to acquire start-up funds, and the first Life Members have truly been founding members. But now, according to our financial kahunas, we face something of a dilemma: if we carry too many Life Members for too long, we'll put an impossible drain on the organization's finances. The possibilities then, are: (1) increase the cost of Life Membership, to, say \$500 or \$1000 (prior Life Members grandfathered in), (2) eliminate the Life Membership category (except for those who are already Life Members as of the date it is discontinued), or (3) keep it the way it is and see what happens. Send in your feedback. The decision will be made in time for the next Journal (about six months from now).

## EXECUTIVE KAHUNA WEDS!

Tony Peckham and longtime sweetie Hilary Saner snuck off to Nevada in January and got married. An appropriate reception was held on their return by





Peckham and Saner unite.  
Photo by Mark Renneker

Mark Renneker and Jessica Dunne, who are still living in sin after 18 years.

## SPECIAL UPDATE

### MOONLIGHT IN NABILA—1990

Nabila Village has asked the SMA for help in building a Community Health Center. At this point, what is most needed is money for construction materials - and we are asking each SMA member to try to make a donation.

If you haven't been to Tavarua yet, you may be mystified by all the fuss over Nabila. Nabila Village faces onto the lagoon you pass through as you boat the three or so miles out to Tavarua Island. During our first conference on Tavarua, in 1986, SMA members became acquainted with the people of Nabila. The hospitality of the Fijians led to the SMA being formally honored in a traditional yagona ceremony, at which time an even greater honor was bestowed upon us - the presentation of a whale's tooth (tabua).

The affinity, rapport, empathy, and bonding of SMA members to the Fijians was totally unexpected. Soon, SMA members had the idea of working in this remote village, seeking improved health for all. We saw Nabila as a model situation - a place for the SMA to learn and teach about ways surfers could help third world villages encountered on surf travels.

in 1987, we held a meeting with the village to inquire as to what they regarded as their number one health problem. We assumed it would be water or sanitation, but to our surprise they unanimously choose the fact that the village lacked a community center, that they needed a building large enough for the entire village to gather together in.

We were stunned. We realized then that the Fijians were light years ahead of us in their understanding of community well-being. Very few Fijian villages have a Community Center, and those that do are highly regarded.

They said the cost for a Community Center would be close to \$15,000, which was too much for us to consider at the time (when there were less than one hundred SMA members to request donations from).

So, we asked them for their second most pressing health need. And that's when they identified a need for clean water - a project we took on. Through the SMA Journal, in less than two months \$3000 was raised (with 1/3rd of the membership donating between \$5 and \$300 each). We donated that money to the village for construction materials to build a rain-water collection system and a 50,000 gallon storage tank.

With their all-volunteer, all-village labor force, there was money left over for refurbishing their dilapidated, tin-shed dispensary and then to help pay for laying a foundation for the community center.

The gratitude of the village for our help was eloquently expressed by Nabila village member, Sunia, our translator and clinical coordinator, who prepared and read to us the following statement at a dramatic and emotional ceremony on July 28th, at the conclusion of the SMA's most recent trip to Fiji (complete trip details in

next Journal):

*"To Members of the Surfer's Medical Association: It is befitting that I should convey to you the general feeling of the people of Nabila before you leave our shores.*

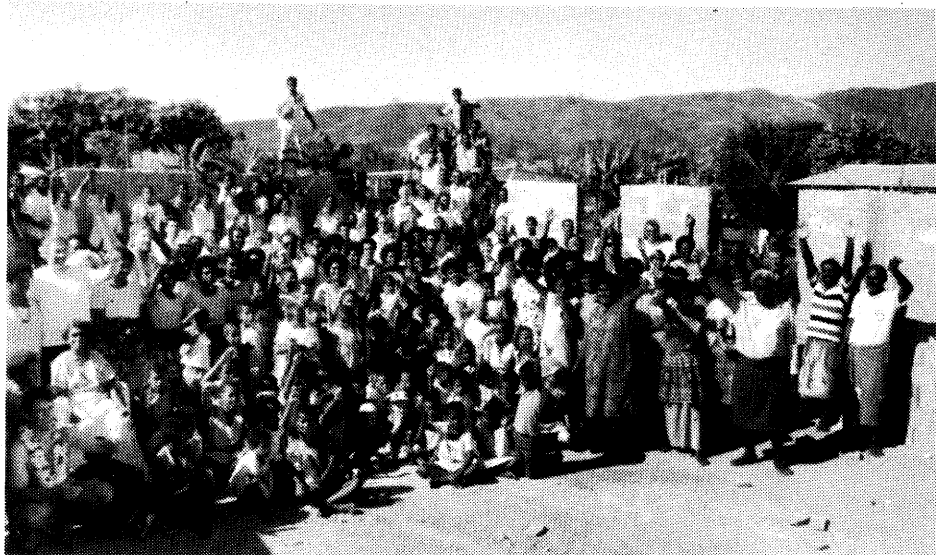
*On behalf of the village elders and the people of Nabila, I wish to express our appreciation and gratitude for numerous contributions you have willingly and freely rendered to us.*

*Foremost, I especially acknowledge the efforts and commitments you have previously made towards developing and bettering our village socially and health-wise. I wish to convey our heartfelt appreciation for your generous financial contributions which have resulted in the construction of our Water Tank, our Dispensary, and the initiation of our Community Center. These three village structures are hallmarks which will stand as lifetime proof of your big hearts and great generosity, to be utilized and used by the present generation and even our children of tomorrow...*

*We pray that God's blessing and love be with you."*

*Vinaka vakalevu,  
The Village of Nabila*

When finished, the Community Center will be 60 by 30 feet, and about 20 feet high. It will consist of one large community meeting room, and three smaller rooms: one for the Dispensary,



*Building on a foundation of health: Nabila's Community Center, currently under construction. This all-village, all-SMA photo was taken on July 28, 1990. We're standing where the Dispensary, Health Education, and Medical and Treatment Rooms will be. The Nabila Community Center will be the first village building in Fiji specifically designed for wheelchair-access. Photo by Sandy Campbell/David McWaters.*

one for health education, and one for medical and dental treatments. The Nabilans have included these rooms in recognition of the SMA's work in the village - that we should have them as a place to work in each time we come to the Village.

The average earnings of a person in Nabila is about \$5.00 per week, but the entire village is working extra hard to contribute to the Community Center.

We are asking you, as members of the SMA, to "Moonlight for Nabila" - to donate your time (and money) for Nabila.

But, it needn't come directly out of your pocket. Consider putting in a little extra time where you work; even one hour of "moonlighting" would be a healthy contribution. Then donate that money to Nabila.

Send in your donation now (see the back page of the Journal for a convenient means to send money). And plan on coming to Nabila (and Tavarua) in the near future to see for yourself what a wonderful use it was of your money.

The Community Center will also benefit tremendously from contributions of dispensary items, medical and dental equipment, and health education materials (particularly books). It is expensive to mail heavy objects to Fiji, and easier to have members who are going to the next conference bring the contributions as part of their luggage. To discuss a possible contribution and to arrange delivery, call one of the following SMA members:

Medical/Dispensary - David McWaters (415-776-8921), Dental - Rym Partridge (408-423-6203), or Health Education (and books in general) - Ethan Wilson (503-753-9003). In Australia, call Gary Groth-Marnet (055 623-377).



## GOALS OF THE SMA

**FIRST WAVE** The number one goal of the Surfer's Medical Association is to educate surfers so they can spend minimal time hassling with doctors and maximal time surfing.

**SECOND WAVE** To conduct and support research and educational activities on surfing and health.

**THIRD WAVE** To represent the sport of surfing in the fields of medicine and science.

**FOURTH WAVE** To teach physicians about the unique health problems of surfers, and how to better care for surfers.

**FIFTH WAVE** To create a network of barefoot doctors and surfing health professionals around-the-world.

**SIXTH WAVE** To protect and preserve the surfer's natural environment: the waves, the ocean, and our beaches.

## SURFING MEDICINE: A PIER-REVIEWED JOURNAL

Here's your chance to add a significant publication to your resume: consider making a submission to the Journal of the Surfer's Medical Association. Send us your surfing related case reports, research, proposals for upcoming trips or projects, stories, and anything else you feel is relevant to surfing and medicine.

### Rules for Submission:

1) Send material in early — at least two months before the next issue.

2) Include pertinent references.

3) We'll love you even more if you put your material on a Macintosh disk & send it to us.

4) Include any graphics and photos (especially surf pics, particularly if they are of you).

5) Proof-read your stuff a couple of times — have your kids correct your spelling and punctuation.

6) We'll publish anything sent in that looks good and passes pier-review (we pass it around the derelicts hanging out under the pier; if it meets their rigorous standards, it's in).

# MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

Memberships are for one year unless otherwise specified, and include a decal, membership directory, biannual journal, and invites to all SMA conferences. Membership is a way of both joining and contributing to the SMA. Choose your category accordingly.

**Life Member:** Totally Committed and has some bucks — pay once and you belong forever. \$250

**Charter Member:** Wants to be a Heavy Local in the organization. \$100

**Health Professional Member:** the Surf Doc Membership — for those who spent too much time going to school and now want to surf more. \$35

**Professional Member:** for non-health professionals with real jobs. \$35

**Barefoot Doctor Member:** the Surfer's Membership — for surfers interested in learning how to take better care of themselves and others. \$15

**Gremmies Member:** for beginning or young surfers. \$5

**Silver Surfer Member:** for the elders of our sport (over 60) No charge.

**Corporate Sponsor:** philanthropy has its costs...\$500 and up.

**Corporate Guilt Member:** for those who have exploited surfing for personal gain — you know who you are, now pay up. \$1000

**The John Cherry "I Won't Join Anything" Membership:** for the truly hard-core non-joiner. \$109.95

**Life's A Beach Member:** for wealthy patrons who believe the surfer's life-style should be supported to the max. \$100

**Illegal Member:** \$100 cash or equivalent. Anonymity guaranteed (unless Nancy Reagan wants to know).

**Surf Parent Member:** for those who want to see Johnny come home in one piece. \$25

**Surf Family Membership:** the family that surfs together, stays together. \$25 (\$50 if any family member puts a degree down after their name).

**Surf Widow Membership:** for spousal equivalents of surfers — the SMA can help! \$10

**I'll Join Anything Member:** for non-surfers who think it would be cool to join a surfing medical association. \$19.95

**Join Now, Pay Later Member:** send us your hard-luck story. \$0

**Organizational Member:** let's trade memberships to keep each other up-to-date. \$0

**Surf Professional Member:** for career surfers — you endorse us, we endorse you. (the SMA supports pro surfing). \$0, and maybe an occasional favor.

**Hodad:** interested in joining, hasn't paddled out yet.

**Shoulder-hopper:** those who drop-in on the SMA without paying their dues.

**Snake:** a flagrant, chronic shoulder-hopper (always promising to pay their dues)

**After-Life Membership:** for Life Members, a chance to surf in the hereafter — the SMA will do everything possible to see that your organs are donated to surfers, and we'll provide a lovely surfboard tombstone for your grave. \$1000

**T-shirts:** \$15.00@, M-L-XL, include SASE (8 oz. @, 9 x 12 in. envelope)

**Decals:** \$2.00@, include SASE (1/2 oz. @, 7 x 10 in. envelope)

**Wall Diplomas:** \$5.00@, include SASE (1/2oz., 9 x 12 in. envelope)

**TO RENEW:** When did you first join, or last renew? Was it a one-year membership? Figure it out (reminders abound). Consider Life Membership to simplify things in the future.

**TO JOIN:** Choose your membership category, fill out this form, make out a check payable to the Surfer's Medical Association (in U.S. dollars), and mail to: Surfer's Medical Association, 2396 48th Avenue/Great Highway, San Francisco, California 94116. (415) 566-4687. Be patient if you don't hear back from us right away (especially if the surf is good).

## PLEASE SEND US THIS INFORMATION

*copy or Xerox if you don't want to disfigure your journal*

Date \_\_\_\_\_

New Member  Renewal

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/State \_\_\_\_\_

Zip \_\_\_\_\_ Country \_\_\_\_\_

Work phone \_\_\_\_\_

Home phone \_\_\_\_\_

Membership Category \_\_\_\_\_

Amount \$ \_\_\_\_\_ (Non-U.S., add \$10.00 for postage)

Type of surfer (stand-up, boogie, etc.) \_\_\_\_\_

Years surfing experience \_\_\_\_\_

Present number of go-outs per month \_\_\_\_\_

Your worst surfing injury \_\_\_\_\_

Type of work/specialty \_\_\_\_\_

Job title/Academic position \_\_\_\_\_

What about the SMA stokes you the most \_\_\_\_\_

Name/address of a surfing buddy(s) who you think would appreciate being invited to join the Surfer's Medical Association:

# THE HOLIDAY SEASON IS COMING!

Give **YOURSELF** and others **SMA GIFTS!!**  
 (And be donating to the SMA at the same time!!!)

## T-Shirts

High-quality (Hanes), colorful SMA logo on back and front pocket, short-sleeve in bone color only. Medium - Large - Extra Large, include self-addressed, stamped envelope (they weigh about 8 oz. each, and one will easily fit into a 9 x 12 in. envelope). Classic gifts. The medium is fairly small, and reasonably fits children and smaller adults. \$15.00 each.

Number of shirts: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Size(s): \_\_\_\_\_  
 \$ Enclosed: \_\_\_\_\_

Must include SASE.

## SMA MEMBERSHIPS

A fantastic gift - join someone up to the SMA (or renew or upgrade your membership). See the listing of membership categories on the reverse of this page, and complete the membership form. Indicate if a gift membership on the membership form (don't worry if you don't have all the relevant information; just put the name, address, and type of membership - we'll have them fill in the rest later).

## Decals

Torquoise-blue SMA logo on white mylar, about 5 x 6 in., perfect for surfboards, car bumpers, windows, notebooks, and office doors. Include self-addressed, stamped envelope (1/2 oz. each, 7 x 10 in. envelope so they won't have to be folded). \$2.00 each.

Number of decals: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \$ Enclosed: \_\_\_\_\_

Must include SASE

## Wall Diplomas

To place alongside your other diplomas, whether from high school or medical school, this signed, slightly surf-motif'ed diploma officially confers upon whomever you indicate "the rights and privileges thereto pertaining to membership" in the Surfer's Medical Association. Get it framed, and give it as a gift! Include self-addressed, stamped envelope (1/2 oz., 9 x 12 inch envelope, so they won't have to be folded). \$5.00 per diploma. Diploma in what name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Number of diplomas: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \$ enclosed: \_\_\_\_\_

Must include SASE

## Books: The Collected Surf Medicine Works

### Volumes 1, 2, and 3

Each volume will be about 300 pages, in a 3-ring binder with **Collected Surf Medicine Works** in gold lettering on the spine. They will look handsome on any bookshelf, and be a powerful reference and educational tool. See p. 48 for more details. Each volume costs \$35.00, plus \$2.40 postage (first class, U.S.), or \$18.00 foreign (if air mail) or calculate sea-mail foreign postage costs for two pounds per volume. Or, order all three volumes for \$100 and the SMA will throw in the postage for free (if U.S.).

**Volume 1:** World Literature on Surfing and Medicine \$35 each # \_\_\_\_\_

**Volume 2:** The Complete Dr. Geoff and Dear Surf Docs \$35 each # \_\_\_\_\_

**Volume 3:** Handbook of Surf Medicine - (underground edition) \$35 each # \_\_\_\_\_

**Complete set of all 3 volumes** \$100 # sets \_\_\_\_\_

Postage amt. \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Total amount \$ \_\_\_\_\_

## Trips

**Todos Santos, Baja, December 7-9, 1990.**  
 I plan to go \_\_\_\_\_  
 and will follow sign up instructions (p. 44-45). # people \_\_\_\_\_

**Tavarua, Fiji, March 16-30, 1990.**  
 I plan to go \_\_\_\_\_  
 and will follow sign up instructions (p. 45-46). # people \_\_\_\_\_

**Grajagan, Java, September, 1991.**  
 I plan to go \_\_\_\_\_  
 and will follow sign up instructions (p. 46). # people \_\_\_\_\_

**Europe (Scotland/France), Fall '92.**  
 I plan to go \_\_\_\_\_  
 (Tentative - we need to know if enough members # people: \_\_\_\_\_ want to go).

## Nabila Donation

Our friends in Fiji - the people of the Village of Nabila - need our help if they are to have a Community Health Center (see page 50). They've raised enough money to get it started, and with an all-volunteer labor force (the entire village), they have so far laid the foundation and partially erected the walls. But more money is needed if it is to be finished. When completed, it will include a dispensary, health education room, and medical and dental treatment room (all rooms intended for the SMA to use when we visit). These will all be charitable, tax-deductible donations. Please give generously, this will be a gift that will go on giving for years to come.

Amount of my donation is: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

## Instructions

Follow the above instructions per item ordered, and make your check out to the SMA. You may want to make the Nabila Donation a separate check for tax-simplification reasons, but still make it out to the SMA, earmarked for Nabila. Mail to: The Surfer's Medical Association, 2396 48th Avenue/Great Highway San Francisco, California 94116. Guaranteed delivery before December 25th if ordered by November 15. These items are only available to SMA members.

Total amount enclosed  
 (all of above) \$ \_\_\_\_\_

TEAR-OFF AND MAIL BACK, OR XEROX IF YOU'RE NOT INTO DISFIGUREMENT.