



Looking forward to a special surf camp for blind members of the Braille Institute Youth Center are front row Latasha Benson, 13, Matthew Sillinger, 15, and Amanda Benson, 9, shown here sitting in front of a Hermosa lifeguard tower. Behind them are veteran surfer and Catalina Classic winner Kip Jerger of Kanoa Eels Surf Camp, Marc Gilman of the Braille Institute and occasional surfer Dru Harrison. Kanoa, which runs a surf camp throughout the summer, will be giving special lessons for blind kids over four days beginning Monday, July 17. Photo by Robb Tucker



Kanoa surf instructor John Philbin looking for waves at Desert Point in Lombok, Indonesia.

One of his new instructors is Dru Harrison is 49-year-old. He has been surfing all but nine of those years. The Hermosa Beach native was a top wrestler at Mira Costa High School along with his two brothers Dine and Drake.

In the mid-60s Harrison was rated number one in the Boys Division in The United States Surfing Association. He went on to be the top junior and the best in the Men's Division. Harrison won the first Pro Surfing Championship at Swami's in 1968 and then the next Smirnoff Pro Surfing Championship at Santa Cruz, California, making him the first the sport's first professional champion.

For the past 20-some-thing years, he has been residing on the Big Island of Hawaii at Pahoa Village. He recently returned to the South Bay from Bali to help two old friends and fellow Bing Surf Team members Joel Lill and Gary Pragegnat sell cars at Janna Cars in Hermosa Beach and wait for Kanoa Surf Camp to start.

Kanoa's other top instructor this summer will be John Philbin, 41. Like Jerger Philbin grew up surfing in Palos Verdes. He just got his Lifeguard Instruction Certificate. Philbin has appeared in the movies "Point Break", "North Shore", "Tombstone", "The Twilight Zone Movie", and most recently "Fall Safe."

But his biggest claim to fame was in 1984 when he became part of a select few to survive a tsunami. Philbin was staying at the Grajagan Surf Camp on Java in a tree house.

"It was right on the beach. Three waves rolled through in the middle of the night. Each wave was 60 to 80 feet tall. I woke up pinned under an uprooted tree. I was under water for at least three minutes. I don't know how I survived," he said.

The Kanoa Surf Camp teaches water safety, lifesaving, rescue techniques, ocean knowledge and surfing. Jerger said it's about 40 per cent girls and the rest boys.

The best way to keep your kids out of trouble in the summertime is to keep them busy. The Junior Lifeguard Program and the summer surf camps do just that. At the end of the day, they are too tired to get into mischief. ER

PIPELINE

Kanoa Surf Camp

By Mike Purpus

Kip Jerger is scolding reveille at 45th Street in Manhattan Beach next month.

Surf troops from ages five to 17 will be ordered to report for the Kanoa Surf two-week boot camp.

The 47-year-old lifeguard was born in San Pedro and grew up in Palos Verdes. The Mindelet and El Camino graduate now lives in Hermosa Beach. He started surfing in Palos Verdes at the Portuguese Bend Club 36 years ago.

He and his brother Tuzo started Kanoa Surf Shop together in Palos Verdes in 1974. It was the largest mail order surf shop in the United States. Kip, Jerry Stevens, Chris Barela, Mike Benavidez and I won The Kanoas by Katin World Surf Team Challenge for Kanoa Surf Shop in 1977. Kip and Tuzo sold the surf shop a few years later.

The 23-year lifeguard veteran received the Medal of Valor medal for rescuing two fishermen after their boat was smashed and sunk in ten foot seas. Jerger has also won the Catalina Classic, a 12-mile paddleboard race from the Catalina Isthmus to the Manhattan Beach pier. When not running his camp, lifeguarding for Los Angeles County, models, and does a little acting when he gets the chance. His latest venture is producing and directing instructional videos for Disney.

Jerger recently returned from running the Kanoa Surf Camp in New Zealand. "You see it's summer during our winter Down Under," he noted.

This is my fifth year for Kanoa Surf Camp here. This season will be better than ever because of the star quality of our instructors."



Kanoa surf instructor Kip Jerger rides a 6-foot-10 inch board down a 20 foot-face at Indicators in Palos Verdes during the epic, 1983 storm surf.