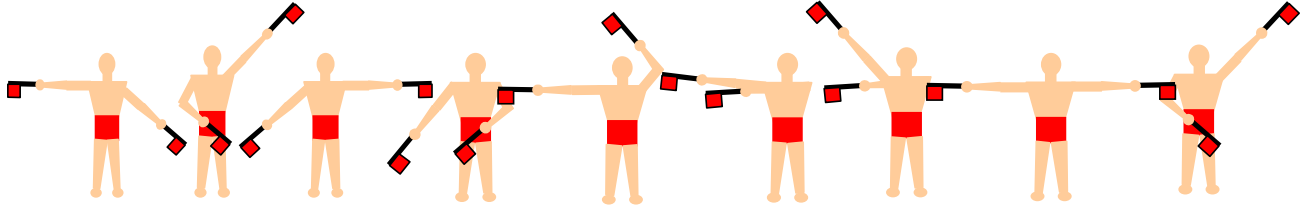


# Ocean City Beach Patrol



Edition 76

Newsletter

Fall 2023/Winter 2024



Over Ninety Years  
of Saving Lives

Maintain Your Role  
in this Fantastic  
Tradition!

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Rookie Graduation 2023

## Message From the Captain

### The Most Challenging Season EVER!

Before I discuss why I have called this the “Most challenging season EVER”, I want to thank each person who played a role in making this not only a successful season but also a safe season for our locals and visitors.

The reason I am calling this “The most challenging season EVER!” has to do with several factors. First and foremost was the number of stands that we were able to deploy at the height of our season in July. The most stands that were ever staffed this past season was 75, which is the lowest number in the history of the patrol, since we guarded to the Delaware line. A second challenge was the fact that rip currents and rip current related drownings were higher in the US than during any other year, which meant that the SRTs who were working had more difficult conditions to control.

The reality of our situation was never more evident than it was on Labor Day weekend when our low numbers intersected with tropical storm conditions, creating the “Perfect Storm”. Over that 3-day period, the SRTs on the 34 stands, backed up by our mobile patrols, rescued over 400 individuals. The harsh reality is that although we successfully sent all of our visitors home safely, all of the surrounding states had drownings and, in some cases, multiple people lost their lives in the ocean.

During this very challenging weekend we successfully used a technology that was new to us for the first time. That technology is a Geo-fencing alert notification system, which created a virtual geographic boundary around an area by means of

GPS or RFID technology, enabling software to trigger an alert when a mobile device enters or leaves the area. This allowed us to send a warning message about the dangerous surf conditions to every mobile device, both on the beach and in the Ocean City area. Since this had never been used by us the response was that people took notice and heeded our warnings for the most part. Because we don’t want to risk losing its effectiveness, we will only use it when absolutely necessary. Thanks to our communications (911) center for making this life saving technology available.



Although, the Labor Day weekend events stood out, every day of this past season had its own unique challenges, with covering the stands as the top priority. Besides, our regular 10:00 – 5:30 guarding of the beach, we still had to staff our AM and PM extended coverage patrols, Junior Beach Patrol, Camps, competitions and special events. With our number one directive of never dropping a stand to cover another event, we had to be very creative. That is where you made the difference by volunteering to cover these additional tasks in addition to working your full regular schedule. Almost every one of our 147 SRTs (85%) agreed to work beyond their regular schedule to assist us in covering the beach as well as many of these other responsibilities. You are the true heroes of the 2023 season.

I believe that most of our staff would have

stepped up as they have in other seasons, but the multiple incentive programs authorized by the Town made the extra efforts even more appealing. Later in this newsletter you can read about the great impact our part-time SRTs made as well as a detailed listing and accounting of the impact the many incentives contributed to our success. But without a doubt the Town's contribution of over \$200,000.00 toward the first ever over-time pay rate helped the most.

The Beach Patrol and the sacrifice of our employees kept the Ocean City beaches safe under the most challenging circumstances. However, the real frustration for me is when people do not follow our strongest safety message, "Keep your feet in the sand...." and choose to enter the ocean when we are not on duty. Unfortunately, this past season, three individuals lost their lives by their choice to swim at a time when we were unable to protect them. As a result of these tragic situations, we were asked to maintain our AM and PM patrols beyond Labor Day Monday, which traditionally ends those additional patrols. Once again, our staff answered the public safety call and were willing to commit to covering these shifts and intervened on several occasions in situations that most definitely would have resulted in more unnecessary tragedies.

[Now that I provided a small glimpse into the challenges of 2023, it is time to look forward to our 2024 season and I have great reason to be optimistic.](#)

What I am most encouraged by is that exit data indicates that most of you are planning to return for another season with the patrol. Although, if you were undecided, I believe that what we have to offer you in 2024 will be a game changer. The analogy that I have been using for the past several years is that "We are fishing in the same pond as the other patrols in our area, but the number of keepers has dropped significantly, so we must have the best bait". To that end, the Mayor and City Council have just approved a pay and incentive package that gives us, by far, the best bait in the Mid-Atlantic area. The key-stone to the newly adopted compensation rates for the patrol is a \$20.00 hr (8.5% increase) starting pay for all SRTs. Additionally they also accepted the entire pay table as presented by the Human Resources Director Katie Callen and Budget Director Jennie Knapp, which provided a 3% pay raise for all Beach Patrol positions. This was not a surprise to me since City Manager, Terry McGean had assured both Director Theobald and I, throughout the past season that he would take these recommendations to the M&CC in October. During the October 16, 2023, regular meeting of the Mayor and City Council they approved not only the new pay table but also agreed to continue all of the incentives that were provided to Beach Patrol employees this past season (see article on page 4).

Now that we are fishing with the "best bait" of any Beach Patrol, what does that mean for our 2024 season. First of all, it makes returning to the greatest job ever an even easier decision. Secondly, it gives you the best set of recruiting tools that we have ever been able to use. Once

you let potential candidates know of all the great reasons to work for the Ocean City Beach Patrol you can also show them how profitable it will be. But don't forget, not only are you helping improve your working conditions by having the additional SRTs, you will also earn an unlimited amount of \$500 "recruiting Bounties".

Speaking of recruiting, we just returned from a highly successful testing trip to Montreal, Canada. This unusual approach is just one example where we have explored options that we would not have considered even a few years ago. Although you began hearing about our possible plan to travel to Canada this past summer, the groundwork began following our 2022 season as Director Theobald and I began discussing the extremely low turnout at our August 2022 PEPSEs. It was first mentioned publicly during last Spring's budget hearing with the Mayor and City Council, when Director Theobald told the council that we needed to take our testing to Canada. During a meeting with City Manager, Terry McGean in September I confirmed that we felt the need to travel to Canada for recruiting and he agreed.

Now that everything was in motion, we used the preliminary research that Sgt. Falcon had been compiling for a few months and began firming up the specifics, such as the location of the "Lifesaving Conference" at McGill University in Montreal. Lieutenants Kovacs and Lee began working within the Town to complete the required paperwork and making arrangements for the 12-hour trip. I also contacted almost 100 current and past J-1 Canadians to inform them about our plans and to ask for their assistance in recruiting for this venue. Lt Kovacs sent recruiting materials to Canadians who had agreed to distribute them. One obstacle was the need to have 3 reliable vehicles that would make the trip. Lt Kovacs was able to borrow a vehicle from the Service Center and a second one from the fire department to accompany one of our vehicles. Lt Lee put together a small testing team of 8 people for the 3-day trip and they departed OC on Friday, November 3<sup>rd</sup>, with a stand and all the other equipment needed to hold a PEPSE.

By the beginning of Registration on Saturday we had 34 pre-registered candidates. Of the 34 who pre-registered, 31 attended the tryout, which is a 91 % rate, compared to a 35% rate for all our 2023 testing. Of the 31 who began the PEPSE 21 passed all aspects of the testing (68% compared to a 40% pass rate for all of our 2023 testing) and accepted appointments to a Surf Rescue Academy, which added to the 14 from all 3 of our August 2023 PEPSEs gives us a head start for the 2024 season of 35 PSRTs (most at this time ever). Although we had 10 candidates who were not successful, the overall experience left them with a real desire to test again so that they could join the other Canadians in Ocean City for the 2024 season and we are confident we will be seeing them again.

Although not a primary goal of holding a test in Canada, the overwhelming support we received by current and past employees was great to see. We had more specta-

tors than candidates, and most had a personal connection with the patrol, some as long ago as 20 years. Some even brought their families to experience what was one of their best memories. One particular alum who was there and sent multiple recruits was Crew Chief Alex Desy along with his wife Lucy (OCBP alumni) and their children. Alex was our top recruiter for every year that he worked for us until he was no longer eligible for a J-1 Visa. However, he started a company in Canada that continues to train surf lifeguards and each year sends us several of his students. Another amazing outcome of this experience occurred as our testing team had dinner Saturday night, when they were joined by many of the current and past Canadian employees as well as several who had tested that day including a few who had been unsuccessful (they want to be a part and have committed to training and re-testing) This trip was without a doubt a huge success and will provide benefits far beyond the three days that we committed to this opportunity.

The bottom line for the 2024 season is that I am confident that we will see a substantial increase in the number of SRTs working full-time, which will result in a much more enjoyable experience for all.

Thank you all for your commitment that resulted in a successful 2023 season and your continued support on making 2024 even better.



### **Welcome to our newest rookies - SRA Class of 2024**

I want to again welcome you into the Beach Patrol family and to the greatest adventure of your life. I assure you that this is just the beginning of a lifetime of wonderful Ocean City memories.

Although you have taken the preliminary and most important steps toward a career with the Ocean City Beach Patrol when you successfully completed the Pre-Employment Physical Skills Evaluation (PEPSE) or the testing required to be a Junior Beach Patrol Assistant Instructor and demonstrated to your testing administrators and the interview committee that you have the “Right Stuff”, this is just the beginning of your adventure. Passing the “test” is a challenge you will never forget and will always remember with great pride, but now the real work begins for you and the Surf Rescue Academy instructors as well as the patrol’s leadership. We are excited by the qualities that each of you displayed as you became one of our JBPAIs (7 offered a position) or PSRTs (35 offered an appointment to SRA) for the “Class of 2024”. We depend on you to help us maintain our great traditions, and to become the future leadership that will continue to move us forward.

The entire Patrol has the collective responsibility of preparing you as a Surf Rescue Technician or a JBP Assistant Instructor and you have the responsibility of arriving in the spring ready to take on the challenges of Surf Res-

cue Academy (SRA). We will provide you with the most comprehensive open water surf rescue training available. You will be taught by the best instructors available, anywhere. To be successful you must use these next several months to prepare both personally and physically for the “Greatest Adventure of Your Life”. To prepare physically you must continue to work on maintaining and improving your general physical conditioning and honing the specific skills needed for the role you tested for. Although we talked about where you needed to improve during your final interview, you should take time to look at our training web resources [www.ococean.com/ocbp](http://www.ococean.com/ocbp) and contact our Director of Training, Lt Ward Kovacs for training tips. If you have any additional questions on how to prepare or what is included in the training academy, please contact the Beach Patrol and we will connect you with someone in your area who can assist in your preparation for SRA. Although it may be difficult to find a pool to train in during the winter, and running in the sand may only be possible at the beach, you MUST find a way to maintain your training and increase the intensity as you approach the start of your Surf Rescue Academy. The Surf Rescue Training Academy is designed to train you in the physical skills required to be a successful SRT or JBPAI, but it cannot provide the necessary physical conditioning in one week to prepare you for the physical demands of the job. During SRA you will not only be utilizing your physical conditioning daily as you practice the skills required but will repeat the “run” and “swim” portions of the test several times during your SRA week. On the Saturday of your training week, all academy participants will be required to pass both the run and swim portions of our test on the beach and in the ocean. You have earned an appointment to a Surf Rescue Training Academy; however, it is the successful completion of all phases of that academy that secures your position as an SRT or JBPAI and allows you the privilege of safeguarding everyone who chooses to visit your beach, swim in our ocean or enroll in the Junior Beach Patrol program. The testing administrators who conducted your physical evaluation and interview believe that you have what it takes, or else you would never have been offered a position. Now, it is solely your responsibility to prove that we made the correct assessment of your abilities to succeed.

Now that you are a part of our family, you have a shared responsibility to help recruit quality candidates that you would like to work with this summer (what an awesome gesture for a good friend). Not only will you help a friend begin their “Great Adventure”, but you will qualify for the \$500 “Recruiting Bounty” for each person who becomes an SRT. Tell all your friends we have scheduled six additional testing opportunities to secure a position as a Probationary Surf Rescue Technician (rookie) for the 2024 season. We have scheduled five off-site tests and a final Ocean City test to receive an appointment to a Surf Rescue Academy for the 2024 season. Our next Pre-Employment Physical Skills Evaluation (PEPSE) will take place March 3, 2024 (Sunday) at Salisbury University, followed by March 17, 2024 (Sunday) at York College in Pennsylvania. March 24, 2024 (Sunday) at the



Richard A. Henson YMCA in Salisbury. April 7, 2024 (Sunday) at Arundel Aquatics Center in Annapolis, with the final off-site testing taking place on April 28, 2024 (Sunday) at Ocean Pines Sports Core Pool, in Ocean Pines (just outside Ocean City). If they are not available to attend one of the off-site PEPSE opportunities, they may still try-out for a position for our 2024 season on June 1<sup>st</sup> in Ocean City. However, they will not be eligible for the Surf Rescue Academy (SRA I) that begins on May 19<sup>th</sup> and will miss approximately four weeks of paid work (over \$3,600.00). Even if you test early, anyone from any PEPSE may choose to attend SRA II which reports on Sunday, June 16, 2024. Although we have many scheduled PEPSE opportunities, the Beach Patrol recruiters are working very hard to fill all positions as soon as possible, at which time we will stop hiring for the 2024 season and cancel future testing.

Although you have provided an estimate of your starting and ending dates of employment, your official invitation and paperwork will be mailed to you along with our spring “Semaphore Newsletter” on April 1<sup>st</sup>. At that time, you will be asked to provide documentation of your last day of work as well as returning all required paperwork. To prepare, personally, you need to finalize all your living arrangements as soon as possible and if you are a Work-and-Travel student, obtain a J-1 work Visa. You may contact current members of the patrol through Facebook or e-mail me [barbin@oceancitymd.gov](mailto:barbin@oceancitymd.gov) and I will put you in contact with resources to find housing which includes available employee housing, which is being reserved for new employees this season (see housing article in this newsletter). Do any or all of these things but whatever you do, you must be ready! And remember... this is just the beginning of the greatest adventure of your life.

## The Incentives Made a Huge Difference

The incentives that were approved by the Town of Ocean City to assist the Beach Patrol in both recruiting new employees and retaining returning employees were successful in 2023 and have been approved by the Mayor and City Council to continue for our 2024 season. First and foremost, the incentives assisted us in covering the beaches and in keeping our visitors safe throughout the summer, although we had less personnel than we wanted. The second huge difference was a benefit to our employees that showed up every two weeks in their pay checks.

**Over-time Pay** - The most impactful Incentive for our 2023 season was the addition of over-time pay for the first time in our history for anyone who worked beyond the “threshold” hours each week. The cost to the Beach Patrol for this added incentive was \$ 207,043.20 above the amount budgeted for salaries. However, the benefit added 6,684 more hours worked to the regular schedule. This provided us with an additional 786 additional guard days throughout our season.

**Signing Bonus** – The \$500 signing bonus was used to recruit new SRTs or past SRTs who did not work in 2022. For new rookies, they receive the bonus once they had passed the PEPSE, completed SRA, and were scheduled in a crew for 1 week. By the end of the 2023 season, 41 SRTs received the signing bonuses for a total of \$20,500.00.

### Recruiting Bounty –

The \$500 award was instituted to encourage current employees to help fill vacant SRT positions by actively recruiting individuals who they felt could perform the job. The notion was that the current employee would be both an encouragement to the recruit as well as helping them navigate the process of joining the Patrol through the completion of probation. Knowing that our current employees are our best resource for recruiting new P-SRTs, we hoped that the \$500 incentive would reward you for your efforts. This past season we awarded 23 recruiting rewards, and, in some cases, an employee received multiple awards. In one particular case, one of our Canadian PSRTs passed the test and then sent a friend to our next test, earning her a bounty just for helping a friend connect to the best job ever.



**Travel Stipend** – Because of the need to encourage our staff to return and assist us with “shoulder season” coverage once they complete their full-time commitment, we offer a travel stipend payable when they make the trip back to OC and work at least 2 days in late August or September. This is not a bonus but rather a stipend to offset the true cost of returning to OC once they have relocated at least 110 miles away from Town. This season, 33 employees took advantage of the travel stipend by returning to OC to help cover our beaches for at least 1 two-day stretch. Thirteen of them returned on at least 3 occasions or more. The cost of this year’s “Travel Stipend” program was \$11,060.00 and provided 79 return trips for SRTs who had left the OC area for other obligations prior to the conclusion of our season.

**Loyalty Bonus** – As staff leaves Ocean City each August for other responsibilities, we know that everyone who remains has additional responsibilities as the distance between stands increases and we move toward the final days of our season. The intent of the “Loyalty Bonus” is to compensate those who remain to cover the beach. This \$1.00 additional bonus for every hour worked during

each season's "critical coverage" period appears at the conclusion of the season and as a lump sum on the final paycheck. This year's critical coverage program was earned by 146 employees at a cost of \$19,330.17 and provided 9 of our SRTs over \$300 in loyalty bonus compensation.

**Post LD Thank You** – Although those working full-time after Labor Day Monday were not aware of this special Post LD Thank You, a total of 36 of our FT fall patrol SRTs received the \$250.00 "Post LD Thank You" for working at least 80.0 hrs. between Sept 5 – 24 resulting in a cost of \$9,000.00.

**Housing Stipend** – Much to our dismay, only 24 individuals completed the application to request the \$250 stipend to offset the cost of seasonal housing before it expired. This is far less than we had budgeted. As a result, only \$6,000.00 of the \$25,000.00 budgeted was distributed.

Additional incentives were taken advantage of by our employees, although they did not impact our budget since they were offered by local and national businesses. These added incentives have a huge impact on our staff, and we need to make sure we take time to say "Thank You". Several sponsors impacted all employees such as Hook Optics, Panama Jack, Jolly Roger and Costal Fitness while many others sponsored individual crews.

The total cost to the Town this past season was about \$ 285,000.00 above the normal salary compensation which is proof that the Town understands the importance of having a fully staffed, high-quality Beach Patrol. And to give you an actual, personal perspective on what all these incentives meant in 2023, one of our SRTs earned over \$ 32,000.00 in salary alone. Not too bad for a seasonal job! It is our hope that the incentives, bonuses, and awards all add up to demonstrating how much the Town of Ocean City and the Beach Patrol leaders appreciate you, the effort you put forth in making sure residents and visitors alike are safe, and how much we value you as an employee. Thanks for making 2023 the best it could be under difficult circumstances and thank you in advance for all your support in making 2024 an even better summer.



**The Canada PEPSE was a success! We appointed 21 of the candidates to our Surf Rescue Academy. There are more tests this winter at pools throughout our region. Spread the word that there are no certification or previous lifeguarding experience needed. Tell your friends we pay you while we train you. Get them to go to [JoinBeachPatrol.com](http://JoinBeachPatrol.com) to register for an upcoming test. Summer 2024 will be here before you know it. Get your friends registered and take advantage of the great incentive of the \$500 bounty. Thank you Alex Desy for the great pictures. capturing a great day.**



## Our returning employees are the foundation of our success!

Congratulations to the following individuals who have met the following longevity milestones. Although we are a seasonal / temporary operation it is true testament to everyone's dedication and professionalism that more than a third of our staff have 5 or more years and nearly half of those have 10 or more years working for the Town of Ocean City. We celebrate all our employees who have committed to work for the Patrol whether for a season or a decade, but we present longevity awards for 5-year milestones. I want to say congratulations and THANK YOU to each of you for faithfully serving the citizens of Ocean City and fulfilling the mission of the Beach Patrol.

Milestone Seasons with the Beach Patrol Received Pins this Summer	
<b>Completed 40th Season in 2023</b>	
Tim Uebel	
<b>Completed 30th Season in 2023</b>	
Colby Phillips	
<b>Completed 25th Season in 2023</b>	
Jake Foy	Debi Tyler
<b>Completed 20th Season in 2023</b>	
Steve DeKemper	Damien Sanzotti
<b>Completed 15th Season in 2023</b>	
Nick Thompson	
<b>Completed 10th Season in 2023</b>	
CJ LaCasse	Alex Siegel
<b>Completed 5th Season in 2023</b>	
Chris Barschow	Tony Handle
Jeremy Cope	Caroline Hennick
Graceann DiPeso	Connor Kick
Will Gough	Katie Zgorski
<b>Having Served the Town for Over 20 Years</b>	
Ben Davis (23 years )	Jamie Falcon (27 years )
Jeff Brabitz (24 years )	Mat Postell (27 years )
Jason Konyar (24 years )	
<b>Having Served the Town for Over 30 Years</b>	
Brent Weingard (34 years )	Mike Stone (39 years )
<b>Having Served the Town for Over 40 Years</b>	
Ward Kovacs (41 years )	Skip Lee (41 years )

### Received Pin this past Summer



### Received Pin During their Milestone Year





**Senator Mary Beth Carozza came to a Monday meeting at the convention center to hand Sgt. Tim Uebel his OCBP certificate and a Governor's Citation for his 40 years of dedication and service to the Town of Ocean City protecting and saving lives.**

### **“Fast Track Back” Program**

Several years ago, we initiated the “Fast Track Back” program to allow any SRT who missed the previous season to return, without having to start as a “Rookie” again. Prior to establishing this program and the requirements, a person who missed a year was required to complete the entire PEPSE and attend the entire Surf Rescue Academy. Now, the “Fast Track Back” program allows them to return with only a few requirements. These are listed below:

To take advantage of the “Fast Track Back” option the following must happen.

- You only missed a single year.
- You notified the Patrol that you were not returning for the previous season.
- You must requalify prior to beginning work on both the run and swim. You may re-qualify at any of our PEPSEs (on-site or off-site – see dates and locations

below)

- You must have current CPR and First Aid certifications (one will have expired last season). You may re-certify on your own or take the course along with a Surf Rescue Academy.
- You must attend veteran re-qualification and re-certification along with other veterans.

We sincerely hope that circumstances are such that SRTs who missed the 2023 season can return to the Beach Patrol for the 2024 season. We are excited about this upcoming season and know it will be even better if those who missed 2023 are able to be a part of it.

We have seen great results from this program the past several seasons, welcoming four “Fast Track Back” lifeguards just this past summer. Since this newsletter only goes to employees from this past season, we need you to let your friends who didn’t work this past summer know what they need to do to return. I will be sending an invitation to all SRTs who missed last season and meet the requirements for “Fast Track Back” listed above. If you know someone who has been away for more than one season, have them contact me for a review of their status and they may qualify for a modified “Fast Track Back”, based on their individual circumstances.



**Damian Sanzotti receiving his 20th season recognition**



**Colby Phillips receiving her 30th season recognition**

## Semaphore Site – Learn, Practice, Challenge Yourself (reprint from spring 2023)

submitted by: ACC  
Everett Brown

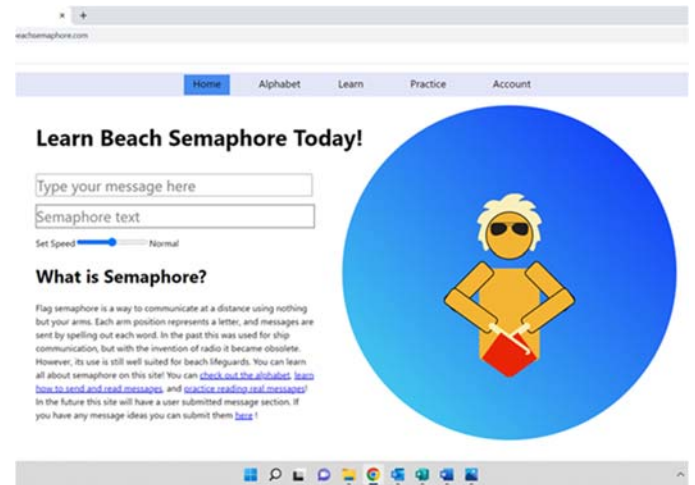


For anyone looking to learn or brush up on their semaphore before next season be sure to check out beachsemaphore.com! For rookies there is a page explaining what messages are used for and how they are structured as well as common abbreviations and

special signals. There are multiple ways to practice memorizing letters and begin reading words at slow speeds. If you want more personalized practice, you can create an account to have your progress tracked. Practicing before you are on the beach will help you stand out and will help with communication especially in the beginning of the summer!

For veterans I've added a more difficult mode to practice with called "survival mode". With every message you get correct the next message is displayed faster. See how many you can get correct in a row – there is a leaderboard for the people with the best scores! The site

is far from perfect, and I am always looking for improvements. If you have any cool ideas to add or come across any bugs, please reach out to me (Everett – everetta-brown@gmail.com). Hope everyone has a great winter!



**Captain's Note:** This is the perfect example of an SRT who saw a need and made it his personal objective to help solve a real issue for our newest rookies. Everett was a rookie when he realized that learning and becoming proficient in this important communication technique was critical to his success as a new SRT. As a result, he has spent three years creating, updating and improving the beachsemaphore.com website. He was appointed as an ACC this past season. Everyone can make a difference for the betterment of the Patrol. What will you do?

## Pay rates Increase for 2024

During the October 16, 2023, regular meeting of the Mayor and City Council, Budget Director Jennie Knapp and Human Resources Director Katie Callen presented pay recommendations and seasonal incentives for 2024. With very little discussion all recommendations were approved and adopted. All incentives that were available during the 2023 season will continue for our 2024 season (see article on page 5). The major change was in the starting pay for SRTs which was raised to \$20.00 hr. which is an 8.5 % increase and is the largest increase in a payrate within the Towns pay tables. Although I was not able to report or use this information prior to the approval by the Mayor and City Council, I was assured during my meeting with Director Theobald and City Manager Terry McGean in September that this was going to happen in October. For all other Beach Patrol positions there will be a 3% increase in payrate, however, the ACC rate will be adjusted so that it remains above the starting payrate of \$20.00 hr. The increased pay will take effect starting with any time worked after December 31, 2023.

<u>JOB TITLE</u>	<b>Grade</b>	<b>2023 Rate</b>	<b>2024 Rate</b>	<b>Step 1 (2%)</b>
Junior Beach Patrol Assistant Instructor	100	15.0000	15.4500	15.7590
Surfing Beach Facilitator	102	15.9135	16.3909	16.7187
Surfing Beach Facilitator - ACC	103	16.3909	16.8826	17.2203
Surfing Beach Facilitator - CC	105	17.3891	17.9108	18.2690
Surf Rescue Technician - Probation	107	18.4481	20.0000	20.4000
Surf Rescue Technician - SRT I	107	18.4481	20.0000	20.4000
Surf Rescue Technician - ACC	108	19.0016	TBD	TBD
Surf Rescue Technician - CC	110	20.5502	21.1667	N/A
Sergeant	112	22.6566	23.3363	N/A



## Request for Certification Information and Copies of First Aid and CPR Cards

Each year I receive many requests for information on the training and certifications that you received while working for the Beach Patrol. Often, it is for college courses that you are taking, but sometimes it involves off-season employment. Although we do not provide American Red Cross Lifeguard certification, depending on the facility a letter from the Beach Patrol may satisfy the requirements to be hired as a pool lifeguard. At your request, I can generate an official letter that documents your training and certifications including NIMS courses and expiration dates of CPR and First Aid. However, copies of CPR and First Aid cards are often required for courses, training or off-season employment. I will do my best to assist you in getting those copies, but the Beach Patrol does not have copies of these certifications in your file.

Our CPR and AED certification comes from the American Heart Association (AHA) and are e-mailed directly to the e-mail address that you provided on the course registration form. I do not have any access to your account, but your instructor of record does and can have the card resent to you. You may also access any previous certifications at the following site:

[AHA eCards verification \(heart.org\)](https://www.heart.org/en/health-topics/cpr-and-aed/aha-certification)

First Aid certification is through the American Red Cross (ARC) and we print and provide a laminated certification card to you. Please place both of your cards with any other important documents. If you cannot locate these cards, you can e-mail me, and I will do my best to assist but it may take a few weeks to get you everything you need.

Certifications from outside agencies are for two years. New employees will receive both certifications the first year during Surf Rescue Academy along with many other trainings including “Stop the Bleed” (incorporated in 2020). Each subsequent year we provide one re-certification during our veteran re-qualification and re-certification day. We alternate between CPR years and First Aid years so that you will always be currently certified in both. This coming season is a First Aid and “Stop the Bleed” re-certification year with a review of CPR and AED skills and protocols.

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## It is Not Too Early to Secure Your Housing for this Coming Summer

Although we completed our season over a month ago and summer seems like a long way off, it will be May before we know it. If your plans include returning to Ocean City with the Ocean City Beach Patrol, you should start lining up housing sooner than later. Not only does this help you by having your housing taken care of, but you have more

time to really find the location, situation and arrangements you want. We are also facing an increasingly critical seasonal housing shortage. If you wait until spring, you may not be able to find any affordable housing or may be forced to take what is still available. Very often, that isn't the best situation. However, to help offset the rising cost of seasonal housing, the Town of Ocean City is, again, offering a \$250 seasonal rental housing stipend for any employee who must rent seasonally to live and work in Ocean City.

Another all-too-common practice is landlords not providing what was promised. Employees find a rental through a private owner and are promised many things, only to find out that the landlord was not prepared to deliver what was promised. But with a job starting and having already paid most, if not all the rent before arriving in Ocean City, and no other living arrangements, the employees just had to accept the situations.

Don't let this summer be just one more case of a landlord taking advantage of someone. Let us help you out by vetting the owner of the property and personally checking it out, if you can't get to Ocean City prior to moving in.

If you find a property through a local real estate agency, the town may be able to help you with some of the up-front costs, such as deposit or beginning rent, until you begin earning your salary with the Beach Patrol. Once you begin work, the funds will be deducted from payroll until all up-front costs are re-paid. If you are interested in participating in the Beach Patrol Rental Assistance Program, you need to contact Lieutenant Kovacs [WKovacs@oceancitymd.gov](mailto:WKovacs@oceancitymd.gov), **BEFORE** April 2024. Just remember, if you do wait until April the chances of locating any affordable housing is highly unlikely. Start looking now.



**Pictured here is the 16th Street housing crew from 2022. Their building was demolished but they managed to find someplace to live in 2023. Reach out now to find housing for this summer. It will be here before you know it.**

# Testing and Recruiting

## Updates on Testing

submitted by: Lt. Skip Lee



In what could be considered a “mild” Summer PEPSE Season, the Beach Patrol appointed 14 P-SRTs to the 2024 Surf Rescue Academy. But what made the 2023 campaign significant was the incredible candidates that passed. Almost to a “T”, each testing officer team commented on how talented the candidates were in August. Hey, let’s be honest: Less and less people are coming out for our tests. We have more people than ever signing up (10% more for 2023 than any other past season) but more and more not showing up (only 35% showed for all 2023 PEPSEs) and sometimes those who do can’t even swim (40% passing) which is why we really need to expand our recruiting efforts to increase the potential for finding those who can pass the test.

An example of this is our trip to Montreal. Through the efforts of Sgt. Falcon and with the encouragement of some of our previous Canadian Crew Chiefs and SRTs, a small team of eight testing officers traveled to McGill University in downtown Montreal to hold a “Lifesaving Conference” on Canadian soils as a means of expanding our number of candidates taking the test. The intent all along was to eliminate the immense time and cost considerations on our J-1 Work and Travel candidates to have to drive (and some fly) to America to take

the test. Sure, those who make the trip are very confident in their abilities and most are successful but only about a dozen candidates a year make the effort. By eliminating their travel obligations and taking the test to Canada, our intent was to quadruple the number of people taking the test and earning an appointment to Academy. This also affords those who pass a wider window of time to secure the coveted J-1 visa and locate accommodations in Ocean City for the summer. It’s out-of-the box thinking that became a reality in 2023 and we need more of this.

Do you have an idea that in the past seemed far-fetched, impossible, crazy? Let’s talk! It’s going to take this kind of thinking in 2024 and beyond to attract, pre-register, test, and hire qualified candidates who are willing and able to do what we do. Should we go to Ohio next or maybe Florida? How about California or Costa Rica? Who really knows what it’s going to take? But, we know it takes thinking like Jamie to make a difference! What are you thinking? Let’s work on those thoughts together and remember the unlimited \$500 recruiting bounty.

What we do know! 4. Job Fairs “feel good” and provide the opportunity to engage with folks we don’t already know but again, very few people we meet at Job Fairs take the test. 3. Social Media is a questionable means of recruiting. Sure, those of us who have Facebook, X, Insta Gram and Snapchat may see the posts, but do they really translate into registrations? The data would say no. Maybe 2% of the people who register indicate they heard about OCBP on Social Media. 2. Newspaper Ads don’t work. It’s like throwing money in the wind. And this isn’t a “it doesn’t work in 2023 thing.” Over the course of 24 years of dabbling in print advertisement, not a single candidate indicated they heard about or read about the OCBP in a newspaper ad, none, nada. 1, Word of mouth is the most successful recruiting tool we have available to us. Candidates are 100% more likely to consider working for us when they hear it from us. We started with providing a nice Hydrroflask as a token of our appreciation for introducing someone to the Beach Patrol and getting them to actually show up for the test. Today, Captain Arbin has championed our recruiting bounty. Tell someone about OCBP, train with them, have them register, get them to show up for the test and pass, get them to report for Academy and complete it, help them transition from the learning environment to the beach, and support them with completing probation and your get \$500 – for each person! Win/Win.

Thanks for reading. Hope this sparks an idea or a person comes to mind to work with you this summer. Be well. Continue training. See you in May.



## Recruiting Efforts for 2024

submitted by: Lt. Ward Kovacs



There are things about recruiting that we know to be true. Our current and past employees are far and away and the most important and successful elements in recruiting new employees. Knowing this, we have tried to incentivize our employees with the “Recruiting Bounty”. We have tried to make receiving the

\$500.00 bounty easier by providing rack cards and smaller cards that have spaces for recruiters to write their names and contact information. We also believe that the newly approved \$20.00 starting rate and the continuation of all our incentives from 2023, will make working for the Ocean City Beach Patrol more attractive than ever, and that makes your task of recruiting that much easier.

Another thing we know about recruiting is that it must be a priority for every Beach Patrol member in order for us to have the success that we desire. If you need any materials sent to you, or made available for pick-up at Headquarters, please let us know. If you would like to staff a recruiting table at a school or athletic event, let us know so that we can get you the needed banners, table cloths, rack cards, even other employees to help you staff an event.

We also know that our Junior Beach Patrol program has evolved into a great source for channeling future SRTs into our ranks. At our Recruiting Work Group meeting on July 28, a suggestion was raised that we extend the contact that we have with JBP members to include time with a current SRT in a stand, in order to further enhance their experience with Beach Patrol and to encourage their desire to become SRTs. While we would have to work out many facets of this proposed idea, it may lead to an even higher percentage of JBP members who move on to become SRTs.

One of our efforts to increase the percentage of registered candidates who actually show up for a PEPSE test has been to have current SRTs reach out to all those who are registered. Crew Chief Katie Zgorski has coordinated these efforts with help from CC Sanders and others. CC Hurst has been added to the group more recently. We have reached out to our Canadian employees and past employees to recruit for our test in Canada, mailing them materials and contact information for those registered.

Recruiting will always bring challenges, but together we can find new solutions to those challenges. Please bring your ideas, time and energy to the table so that we can continue to find new avenues toward the success that we all hope to have for 2024 and beyond.

## Information



### Thinking Ahead!

submitted by: Lt. Skip Lee

As many of you may recall from the spring of 2023, Paul Vasselotti's girlfriend, Mary Kate, offered resume building support for all Beach Patrol employees. Honestly, I have no idea how many of us reached out to her and got the assistance she offered but it did make me think; is a good resume and a couple of references what it takes to transition away from college and Beach Patrol into the adult world of career?

Working in Human Resources for the Town has given me a whole new perspective on the hiring process in 2023. It's an employee-market for sure. Long are the days when 100 candidates applied for three positions. Over the course of the past two years, I have seen a couple of jobs with a dozen applicants but most vacancies have but a handful of candidates. Of those candidates, only a few are actually qualified – but what of the 50-60% of those ones who aren't? Did they take the time to actually read the job description or were they only attracted to the position title and salary? What's becoming of the workforce and how can you prepare for what lies ahead?

During the summer of 2024, I would like to offer job counseling, maybe even teaming up with Mary Kate if she's still interested to coach you for what's next in your life. It's never too early to prepare. Even if you are a rookie with four more summers on the Beach Patrol or a recent Grad-School Graduate ready to take the leap, I think I can help. This would be an informal conversation about next steps, evaluating current opportunities, identifying transferrable skills, and interview coaching. These components of the application process seem obvious but my observations tell otherwise.

Take for instance a recent applicant for the open GIS Coordinator position in OC. We'll call him Stu. The Job Description indicated degrees and certifications required, years of experience, and the obligation to work in the Town in order to do the job. Stu's resume touched on a couple of these requirements, had the traditional “Objective” that addressed the TOC job specifically, and

offered some superficial connection for what the town was seeking. What got Stu the interview, though, was the cover letter. It hit all the marks! So, Stu, in his collared shirt, shorts and crocs, shows up a couple minutes late for his interview (sending the panel into a bit of a tailspin given the fact that there were other candidates on the scheduled to follow) in Ocean City. The structured interview begins and within three questions, it's obvious Stu doesn't have a clue. At one point, a panelist asked about something written on the cover letter related to a question he was asked to respond to (essentially handing him a bone) and he said "ChatGBT wrote that and I'm not really sure what it said." OMG! Soon after that, he shared that he lived out of state and was hoping that the job could be remote – completely opposite of what the JD job description stated. Well, it wasn't long until that interview was over and Stu was heading back to Virginia.

My question is this – how did it even get to that point. What had Stu done, or better worded, not done, to prepare? Don't be a Stu.

This past Summer, Joe Bunke and Patrick Reid, both asked me for assistance as they began preparing for life after Beach Patrol. The truth is that I hope neither leaves for good because they are both outstanding Crew Chiefs and managers on the Beach Patrol...but life happens. If I can help you in the same manner I helped them, than I would feel honored for doing so. It's never a problem to ask for assistance. There's no need for "I got this on my own" here. Please don't hesitate to reach out. I'd be happy to talk. All the best!

**Captain's Note:** Skip has made some great points, but this isn't anything new. When I was conducting interviews for positions in the technology department, I saw many applicants who learned a few acronyms related to networking and technology skills, only to discover that they had no idea of what they were talking about. What is true, is that transferable skills become more important and that is where I can help. If you ask me to write a letter of recommendation as a reference, I will highlight your performance during your Beach Patrol career and will relate those transferable skills that you have demonstrated. After all, the best predictor of "future performance" is "past performance" and you time with the Patrol is far more valuable than you may realize.



## Social Media

submitted by: Kristin Joson

We continue to keep our social media presence in the off-season. This is a time when the public is less aware of the Patrol and it's always a great time to educate our followers about beach and water safety. We also continue to do weekly posts to enhance our recruiting efforts. I appreciate and enjoy sharing pictures and videos of our lifeguards in action. Many of you have been very helpful this past summer, and since we ended our season, by sending me pictures (Don't Stop). If you have pictures that you want to see on our social media page, please feel free to email them to me [kjoson@oceancitymd.gov](mailto:kjoson@oceancitymd.gov). You can also text them to 301 751 3021.



Our recruiting/social media work group continues to give input and ideas on making our social media even more effective. Eight members of our testing team traveled to Canada for our first off-site PEPSE and passed along content that I was able to post. Others keep me informed about off-season training and recreation that they are participating in. It helps keep our platform fresh and lets others know what a great group of people work for the Patrol and the opportunities that the Patrol brings us even in the off season.

Let Lt. Kovacs or me know if you want to be a part of this group in 2024. I want to thank the people that signed up to be a part of the group and came to the meetings. It really helped this past summer as I was away for a good portion. This team effort helped to make our social media presence informative and engaging. The group included CC Luke Ramina, ACC Connor Lawrence, CC Chris Sanders CC Katie Zgorski, and Sgt. Josh Wilder. A special shout out goes to our light duty staff that also played a huge part in our social media success. SRT Dietz was injured on duty and during his light duty tour he created all the Surf Beach and tides daily posts. This was very helpful as I was able to schedule the entire summer for these daily posts that all had a recruiting theme.

**Captain's Note:** Please be aware of any content that you post on your personal social media since you are a representative of the Beach Patrol, but always share our posts to as many social media outlets that are available to you.



## CC History – CREW 2

submitted by: Lt. Mike Stone



This is a continuation of a task I started with in both the fall/spring newsletters last year (Crews 1 & 16 respectively). I had been thinking about doing this for several years and Crew 2 (N. Division St.) is the third attempt of a crew that I have been working on. I just wish I had access to information for the years prior to my first year on Beach Patrol which was 1984. That year (spring) I was a student at SSC (Salisbury State College) and I was encouraged to try out for the OCBP by two of my friends, Dave Meehan & Russell Shiflett. Dave M. would later graduate & move on to flying helicopters for the US Army and Russell S. & I stayed around a little longer to eventually become Crew Chiefs (CCs) together in 1987. I was named the CC for Crew 1 that year and Russell S. was named the CC for Crew 2. In addition to having the seventeen on beach Crew Chief positions (we have 18 now) there were two Dispatching Crew Chiefs who worked the switchboard (no radios then for CCs), Jeff Davis and Ward Kovacs. As the summer progressed, Jeff Davis became tired of being in the office all the time and asked me if I wanted to switch. I said no but asked Captain Schoepf if we could share/split time between the beach and dispatch. He wasn't interested in having us do that, he wanted people to do one position or the other. Jeff Davis ended up asking Russell (my roommate) and they switched. Here is the information that I was able put together for 1977 thru 2023 however there is some missing information:

1977 – Butch Arbin  
 1978 – Butch Arbin  
 1979 –  
 1980 –  
 1981 –  
 1982 – J.K. Smith  
 1983 –  
 1984 –  
 1985 – Mike Brittingham



1986 – Andy Vye  
 1987 – Russell Shiflett / Jeff Davis  
 1988 – Kenny Marsh  
 1989 – Kenny Marsh  
 1990 – Paul Chapman  
 1991 – Paul Chapman  
 1992 – Paul Chapman  
 1993 – Jodi Iskra  
 1994 – Sean LeBren  
 1995 – Rich Fenati  
 1996 – Ed Fisher  
 1997 – Matt Pitroff  
 1998 – Jason Janowich  
 1999 – Jason Janowich / Angela Vavasori  
 2000 – Chuck Kelly  
 2001 – Chuck Kelly  
 2002 – Tim Reese  
 2003 – Scott Baker  
 2004 – Scott Baker  
 2005 – Jim Close  
 2006 – Jim Close / Lauren Patton  
 2007 – Lauren Patton  
 2008 – Steve Fowler  
 2009 – Steve Fowler  
 2010 – Jon Clouser  
 2011 – Damien Sanzotti  
 2012 – Liz Vanderclute  
 2013 – Liz Vanderclute  
 2014 – Liz Vanderclute  
 2015 – Liz Vanderclute  
 2016 – Matt Wojciechowski  
 2017 – Adam Payne  
 2018 – Adam Payne  
 2019 – Adam Payne  
 2020 – Adam Payne  
 2021 – Adam Payne  
 2022 – Patrick Reid  
 2023 – Jeremy Cope

I had some help from Ward Kovacs (Old BP year-books), & Tim Uebel (Crew & group pictures) in compiling this list and hope to do the same for some other crews in future newsletters. If anyone reads this article and has any additional information to share, please let me know as being accurate is important for our history. We had several CCs who were in Crew 2 for multiple years. However, Liz Vanderclute was there for four years & ADAM PAYNE is the leader with FIVE summers, thank you Adam!!

**Captain's Note:** For at least the past 45 + years there were 17 or 18 crews, however, during my first few years there were 18 ½ crews to cover all 10 miles. Each crew had 6 stands and crew 18 ½ had 4 stands and ended at 146<sup>th</sup> street. If you do the math that is 112 stands along the beach. Compare that to this past summer's deployment of 75 stands and you can see how spread out we were in 2023 vs 1973. It is interesting to also note that although we had more stands, we needed less personnel to cover them due to not having lunch rovers and not always having days off. Because we were not paid hourly, working 6 or 7 days gave us the same paycheck.

## Junior Beach Patrol Program Continues to Thrive

submitted by: Lt. Ward Kovacs

Our Junior Beach Patrol program continued grow in 2023, seeing a record number of children registered for the camp. We topped 330 members for the second straight year. While staffing the camp with SRTs was a challenge, the Assistant Instructors, past Assistant Instructors and our coordinator, Ava Shorkey did a great job ensuring a safe, fun and educational experience for each of the ten sessions and the one-day clinics. We have already completed tests and interviews for next year's Assistant Instructors and our numbers are looking good.

One result of the growing popularity of the JBP program has been the growth in the number of children that are put on wait lists once a session reaches the maximum capacity of 30 members. One consequence of this is that there are often children who would be returning as level 3 and Crew Chief levels left on the waiting list. These "advanced" level campers are often the most likely members to go on to be SRTs when they reach 16 or 17 years of age. In order to address this issue, we are working with Recreation and Parks to reserve opportunities for advanced level members (going into Level 3 or CC) to register. We are hoping that this will then create a larger candidate pool for potential SRTs in the future.

**Captain's Note:** Although recruiting was never the reason that we began our Junior Beach Patrol program, but rather an attempt to "educate" our younger beach users, it has become our most reliable recruiting pipeline. This past summer we employed 7 Assistant Instructors (age 15 – 16), 5 of which have chosen to move into the SRT ranks at age 16 and have already passed the testing. Additionally, several seasons ago we began allowing other 16-year old's who had completed all 4 levels of JBP and were recommended by the day leaders to test for an SRT position, which has been a successful addition to our recruiting.



JBPAI Asten Rinnier after rescuing this young boy. His mother sent the picture in. She said she would love to honor this lifeguard for saving her son's life.

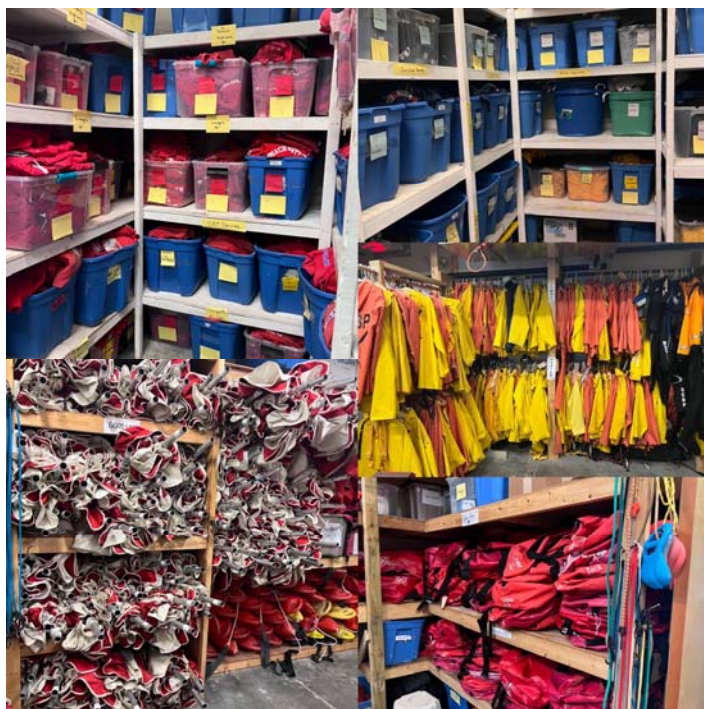
## Equipment Update

submitted by: Sgt Colby Phillips

Happy Fall to everyone. Shut down in the equipment room has gone very well. By the time you receive this, I will have inventoried all the items in the EQT room. Each fall we work hard to keep a good inventory list of all the dry goods. Everything in the equipment room is inventoried from clothing down to the band-aid boxes. This helps us in ordering for next summer so we do not have any waste but also are able to determine the exact needs. After all the uniforms are distributed for the season, I go through to see what we have low stock on so I know what is a need for the following year. For instance, this season we had a high volume of size large sweat pants in both Crew Chief and SRT requests. An order was placed for new sweats in size large (and medium) and have already been received for next summer. Swimsuits are ordered every year and that order has also arrived. This includes all ranks (except officers). I know beanie hats were a popular request this past summer so that will be one of the items I look to get before next summer season. If you have any suggestions, you can always email me and I can look into it. My email is colby9115ocbp@gmail.com. I wish everyone an awesome winter and see you next spring.



**Captain's Note:** Although much more expensive (4-5 times) than our traditional cotton short and long sleeve T-Shirts, we are transitioning to shirts that have a sun protection factor (Anetik) so that you can be protected from the dangers of UV radiation. It is my goal to have all equipment ordered, received and ready for distribution by April.





## Quad Fleet to Remain at Fifteen for 2024

submitted by: Lt. Ward Kovacs

With recent staffing numbers being lower than what we have historically hoped for, the Mayor and City Council agreed to allow us to increase our fleet of ATVs from twelve to fifteen for the summer of 2023. While this proved helpful in our efforts to provide coverage on the beach once the additional units were outfitted and brought into service, they were not ready until our summer season was well underway. In order to start our 2024 season with the same level of Mobile Rescue Unit coverage with which we ended the 2023 season, the Beach Patrol asked the City Manager to allow us to purchase three quads before the start of the next fiscal year, for which they are budgeted, that starts July 1, 2024. The City Manager then broached the subject with the Mayor and Council, who approved the proposal. While this created more work for the city's Budget Manager, who had to find the funds to cover the expense, it was handled quickly, enabling the city to begin the bidding process required to purchase the new ATVs. Bids have been returned, and the new ATVs should be delivered around the end of November. This will allow us to get the new quads fully outfitted and ready for service by the start of our 2024 season.



Sgt. Tim Uebel leading the training for the quad ride along.

safety events. In early September we ended our Sundaes in the Park and our Life Saving Museum programs. Then, October kept us busy with educational outreach events. On October 7<sup>th</sup> we had the dynamic duo team of Grace and Callie presenting at the Showell Elem. Fall Fest. On that same day we had Harrison Duncan and Hayden Hambury at the Home Depot Kid's Workshop. We have several winter outreach events that are already scheduled.

All in all, it was by far our busiest and best year of spreading the word about beach safety. The feedback has been extremely positive and I expect next year to be even busier. If you are close enough to Ocean City during the off-season and would like to be a part of our safety presentations and other displays, contact Lt. Kovacs at headquarters and you will be added to the resource list. If you are asked to do a presentation off-site in your hometown, contact Lt. Kovacs and we will make sure you have anything you need for your presentation. An educated beach patron is a safe beach patron and our statistics continue to verify this claim.

## Strategic Planning with the OCBP

submitted by: Sgt. Damian Sanzotti

This past summer, the Sergeants and Crew Chiefs began the formal process of strategic planning. First, we must understand that this is not an expeditious process. It takes time, diligence, and follow through, which is why we have formed committees made up of CCs and Sgts that will steer strategic plan into the future.

We started out our first session with some fun, playing around on a platform called Mural. This platform is a great way to get a ton of ideas organized without talking over one another. As CC and Sgt groups, we identified the best elements of the Patrol and the ones that may need updated or changed. Next, we categorized all the ideas and recommendations into five primary topics around which our committees would be formed. The five categories that won out are: Recruiting, Communication, Training, Work Conditions, and Equipment. Finally, the committees were formed. Each committee is made up of two or three Sgts and three to six CCs. The committees have been meeting this fall to set short, medium, and long-term goals which will be shared out in the near future. Our primary goal is to create a stable and sustainable path forward for the entire Patrol, with a focus on safety and education.

As we all move around and see each other this winter, make sure to thank one another for an exceptional summer this year. We did a lot, with a little! As you start to return next summer, please ask the Crew Chiefs and Sergeants about the strategic plan if you think it is something you would be interested in helping with. It is a great resume builder, and you will gain some experience and knowledge related to aspects of teaming. See you all soon!

## Public Education Outreach – A Year-Round Mission

submitted by: Kristin Josen

When it comes to educating the public, one season blends right into another without the patrol skipping a beat. We have made the annual shift from providing on-site beach safety presentations toward off-site educational beach

# Training

## OCBPSRA – Having a Deep Bench!

submitted by: Sgt. Damian Sanzotti

Two of the greatest things about this job are the atmosphere we work in (the beach), and the amazing people we get to work with (you & me). I mean, all the other stuff is awesome too, like making a difference in another human's life that people will remember forever (significance). But all of that aside, we have one of the most amazing venues to conduct training. Look at the picture to the right...those people are getting ready to participate in a workplace training exercise, most of the teachers in my county do not look like that when they are walking into training at 08:00.



Despite what some of you may think or know about training and professional development, this is a unique experience. It is always fun and interactive, while building on previous knowledge and a capacity for new knowledge. It is also necessary training if you would like to move into a new position on the Patrol. To become an assistant crew chief (ACC) you must complete SRT II, and to become a crew chief (CC) you must complete SRT III. Each module averages out to be about a five evening or morning commitments spanning anywhere from five to eight hours of training. Please make sure you check the bulletin at the beginning of next summer for a full calendar of events and requirements. If you should have any questions in the off season about either of the modules, Sgt. Wilder will be able to answer your questions regarding SRT II and Sgt. Sanzotti will answer any questions regarding SRT III. Enjoy your winter!!!

### SRT II

The following individuals currently have SRT-II certification and are eligible to apply for the training position of Assistant Crew Chief for the 2024 season (They did not serve as a CC or ACC this past season).

Amberman, Michael	Gough, William	Ross, Kameron
Beck, Thomas	Hetherington, Seth	Silbaugh, Atticus
Bookwalter, Bradley	Hufnagel, Alex	Standish, Theodore
Brown, Hunter	Johnson, Zachary	Sullivan, Timothy
Bunke, Jake	Kick, Connor	Thompson, Nicholas
Buonocore, Anna	Krause, Richard	Turner, William
Coalson, Ryan	Norris, Andrew	Williams, Jane
DiPeso, Stephanie	Paquette, Devin	
Friedman, Andrew	Powell, Thomas	

**Additional Note from Captain:** There are several SRTs who have completed all the criteria to receive SRT II certification, except the additional required NIMS courses (ICS 200 & 800). You may complete these courses at any time and your certification will be updated. However, to be considered for appointment as an ACC for the 2024 season you must complete these NIMS courses by December 31, 2023. An applicant who has completed all the criteria for the SRT II certification, which is totally in your control, but is only missing the 100 days after probation, will receive favorable consideration if you apply for one of the ACC appointments. However, if you are missing anything other than the required number of days worked, I **will not** include your name for consideration, since you did not complete those criteria that you were in control of.



### SRT III

The following individuals who were not Crew Chiefs during the 2023 season currently have SRT-III certification (date completed) and are eligible to apply for promotion to Crew Chief for the 2024 season.

Coalson, Ryan (08/25/2022)	Ritter, Ethan (08/07/2023)
Coleman, Maxwell (08/07/2023)	Standish, Theodore (09/03/2022)
Hodos, Jack (07/25/2023)	Sullivan, Timothy (07/06/2023)
Hufnagel, Alex (07/09/2020)	Thompson, Nicholas (09/06/1999)
Norris, Andrew (06/30/2023)	Turner, William (08/30/2021)
Paquette, Devin (08/17/2014)	Zgorski, Kyle (08/15/2023)

**Captain's Note:** It is encouraging to see so many qualified SRTs that are ready to move into management positions. It is always a loss when a current member of the Beach Patrol management must leave their position and move on but knowing that we have prepared so many others to take over is what keeps this organization great. I want to give special thanks to Sergeant's Wilder and Sanzotti, who have shouldered the bulk of organizing the OCBPSRA certification modules this past season, but I also want to thank others who have stepped up and helped lighten the load.

### **SRTs Lace Up!**

submitted by: CC Katie Zgorski

Although we spend copious amounts of time training in the water for competitions and rescue scenarios throughout the summer, several members of the Ocean City Beach Patrol have laced up their running shoes and put in the training before and after work.



On June 11, 2023, Crew Chiefs Chris Sanders and Katie Zgorski and former guard Cate Calogero competed in Ironman 70.3 Eagleman in Cambridge, MD. This was their second year competing in this event and had a great time representing OCBP with Katie improving her overall time by 1 minute from the previous year's event. On September 10, 2023, three current guards ACC Emma Bridges, CC Tyler Khounsacknarath, and CC Luke Ramina and former guard Cate Calogero competed in Ironman 70.3 Atlantic City where they faced brutal rain, wind, and heat on their way to a very well-earned finish! The group celebrated the day even more upon hearing the news that Bridges qualified to compete at 70.3 World Championships in New Zealand in December 2024!

The guarding season may have officially ended on October 9, but marathon training was reaching its peak mileage for a few more SRTs to compete in running events later this fall. On October 14, 2023, CC Samantha Bingaman set a course personal record at the Baltimore Half Marathon and placed 10<sup>th</sup> for women overall and 3<sup>rd</sup> in her age group. October 21, 2023, Crew Chiefs Samantha Bingaman and Katie Zgorski along with Dan Pogonowski and

former guard Emma Williams competed in the Patapsco Valley 50k (31 miles!) in Catonsville, MD. The weather was perfect for a race in the woods and the trails were ready for the competitors to rip the hills and eat all the snacks that laid ahead! Zgorski finished top 8 for the women as well.

The following weekend proved to be an exciting one in the world of running with both the inaugural Ocean City Running Festival taking place on our own turf and the Marine Corps Marathon in Arlington, VA. Several guards signed up for these events including first time full marathoners (26.2 mi) ACC Chris Barschow, ACC Emma Bridges, and CC Torey Hurst and first-time half marathoners (13.1 mi) CC Hannah Cope, Julia Cope, and Courtney Spelman as well as some repeat offenders including CC Patrick Reid and CC Katie Zgorski. Saturday was HOT and sunny making running conditions brutal, but everyone did an amazing job reaching their goals of finishing the race with only one serious dehydration among the group. Big thanks to several other guards and friendly locals for cheering us on and encouraging us along the way! On Sunday of that weekend, SGT. Jamie Falcon came back from a 20-year racing hiatus, and competed in the Marine Corps Marathon where he faced slightly less-hot conditions and was cheered on by family and more former guards! Jamie had raced 6 marathons in his 20s and made a very strong come back this year at age 50!

Coming up later this fall are a few more running events many guards will be participating in. Be on the lookout for Torey Hurst, Emma Bridges, Callie Mull, Katie and Kyle Zgorski, and more at the Bay Bridge Run 10k on November 11 in Annapolis, MD. The following weekend is the Philadelphia Running festival with Tyler Khounsacknarath and Chris Sanders running the half marathon on Saturday and Training Officer Paul Vas-

salotti, accompanied by his girlfriend Mary Kate, running their first marathons on Sunday. ACC Everett Brown will be running the Greensboro half marathon in Greensboro, NC; on November 18, ACC Brendan McLaughlin will be running the Milano21 half marathon in Italy as he is studying abroad; and finally, on December 3, 2023, Chris Sanders will be running the Nittany half marathon in State College, PA. Happy taper and good luck to all!

Keep up the great work everyone, and don't forget to swim!

**Captain's Note:** It has always been the case that all Beach Patrol SRTs are in incredible shape to perform the skills of surf rescue work, however, those listed in this article and many others who were not involved in these races use their personal training time to take training to the next level. The benefit of all this training is they are using these skills to keep our beaches safe. In addition to these types of running competitions our staff are also involved in competitions specific to lifeguarding skills (see article by Sgt. Wagner below). Just remember as you recruit, that most athletes become even better athletes after spending a season with our staff of incredible physical mentors.

### OCBP Competition Team

submitted by: Sgt Travis Wagner

The Ocean City Beach Patrol competes in many lifeguard competitions throughout the summer season. Events range from running, swimming, paddling, or sometimes combinations of these disciplines together. The first competition of the year is the Ocean City Competition hosted up north on 130th street in June.



OCBP also competes within the OCBPMDUSLA chapter in the mid-Atlantic regional competitions in mid-summer. USLA Nationals are held in early August switching from locations such as the local VA beach, California, Texas, and Florida. OCBP took almost a dozen guards to VA Beach this year to compete in many events. Brian Hoskins won the inaugural 200m soft sand sprint! Several girls' and boys' individual events and team events also placed in the final heats against the Nation's fastest lifeguards! Follow the @OCBPMDUSLA Insta page.

If you are an athlete, or just interested in competing and becoming a better version of yourself, please reach out to Sgt. Wagner or any of the crew chiefs involved with the competition teams for how to become more involved this coming summer!

**Captain's Note:** I want to congratulate all members of our competition teams, but also want to say a big thank you to those non-competitors who volunteered to work their days off so our representatives were able to compete.

## Local News

### Winterfest of Lights Trains

submitted by: Lt. Skip Lee



For the second year now, the Tourism Department has approved the Beach Patrol Train Display in the Rotunda of the Convention Center. A couple of us train enthusiasts can't seem to grow up and still play with trains – in a big way! We've set up an 18' round garden inside the rotunda and feature both a Summer and Winter scene with animatronics, eight working trains, and decorations galore. We are also

afforded the opportunity to do Beach Safety Presentations, share Beach Safety materials, and encourage visitors to safely enjoy our beach in the summer months. It's a stark switch in temperature and location from our usual presentations, but successful nonetheless.

This year, we could really use some help...and you don't have to know anything about trains. Each Wednesday – Sunday, the train display is open from 5:30-9:00pm. We have at least one Engineer (sometimes two) each evening and also desire to have a Conductor (another name for Greeter or Host). This person usually stays by the door, welcomes visitors into the Winterfest Train Display, points out any features significant to that evening, shares Beach Safety information, and is another helping hand in the event that there would be a need. A beach patrol employee could come for the entire evening or just a couple of hours. Whatever works in their schedule? Let Skip or Mike know by texting them at 443-618-6866 or 410-641-6699 and tell us when you can join us. You don't have to live in the Ocean City area either! If you're heading to the beach for the weekend, please consider working with us in the evening before going out for the night. You'll be done before 9:00 and most places don't even get going until 10:00pm. Junior Beach Patrol members are encouraged to participate as well. Just let Skip or Mike know when you can be there.

The benefit to the Beach Patrol is that each evening, we accept donations earmarked for things that are not provided for by the Town, like competition entry fees, Mid-Atlantic and National Comp team expenses, awards ceremonies, food at Crew Comps, etc. If you didn't get to see the trains last year, please be sure to make it one of your winter destinations this Holiday Season. The trams will be running again at Northside Park this year and the Trains are running in the Welcome Center. Thanks in advance and we hope to see you there.



## Santa's Helper

Reprint of an article from Ocean Pines Progress Nov. 2023 issue  
submitted by: Sgt. Colby Phillips

LIFESTYLES

### Colby Phillips continues tradition of helping to send letters to Santa

*Deadline for requests no later than Nov. 15*

Berlin resident Colby Phillips has partnered again with the North Pole to help send letters from Santa Claus to local children & beyond. Twelve years ago, Phillips said she went online to look for a service that would deliver a holiday letter to her two daughters, Remy & Sadie, then 10 and 5 years old. "There were plenty out there, but they cost upwards of \$15. That seemed high for a letter I could probably write myself with Santa's help," Phillips said. "So, Santa and I came up with a fun letter and offered the same service to a few friends, and it's just grown over the years." Each year, Phillips sends letters from Santa to close to 1,000 children all over the United States. She starts in October to keep up with the high demand, and said she's used enough glitter over the years to fill several large warehouses. "My house glistens for a few months, and I usually have someone tell me I have glitter on my face at some point," she said. Phillips became acquainted with St. Nicholas when she was just a little girl. "Because I have always believed in him, he trusts me to help him carry out this important tradition," she said. "He truly is a jolly person! And his sweet tooth is as big as mine, so we enjoy discussing letters over sweets!" Along with getting to know Father Christmas, Phillips said she's also met with his lovable, furry sidekicks. "The reindeer are wonderful!" she said. "I like to make the letters based around a continuous story. Several years ago, I introduced Peppermint the Reindeer, who was welcomed by the children with such excitement and love. Last year, our story introduced Gumdrop the elf who has a very big, sweet tooth! This year, Santa will talk about Gumdrop and Peppermint and what they have done over the last year. A coloring page will be included of Peppermint and Gumdrop as well."

Richard Ludwick of Captain's Cove drew the illustration of Peppermint and Gumdrop, and he drew them exactly as Santa and I had envisioned. These letters are free and community donations throughout the years of stamps and funding have contributed greatly. "I can't thank Thom Guylas & Emily Davis with Ace Printing in Berlin enough for their contribution and help in printing these letters and labels for me the past several years. I also appreciate the community and those who have donated stamps and funding for materials. It truly is only my time in stuffing and imagination of the story that I do at this point."

To receive a letter from Santa, simply email [santaphillips@yahoo.com](mailto:santaphillips@yahoo.com) by November 15th and include the child's name and address. You can also request a letter for an adult but please specify traditional or humor as Santa can have a real sense of humor when he wants too. If children want to write a letter to Santa, which he loves, they can drop them off at the Ocean Pines post office or the Captain's Cove Marina Club front desk and Santa will reply with a special thank you included in the letter. "And don't worry Santa does not promise anything, especially iPhones, puppies or baby sisters!" For Phillips, continuing the tradition is a wonderful way to stay in touch with an old friend, who just happens to be made of pure Christmas magic. It also warms her heart to help share good tidings each year with hundreds of children. "I love the innocence of children," Phillips said. "Children really teach us about faith, believing in something they don't actually see with their own eyes, like Santa coming into their house at night. I feel that, in this day & age, if we can keep them believing in the miracle of Christmas and bring a smile to their face, then I have accomplished what I set out to do."

**Chamber hosting 'Best of Us' banquet Nov. 9**

The Ocean Pines Chamber of Commerce will be hosting its 2023 "Best of Us" awards banquet at the Carousel Hotel, 11750 Street and Court at Highway, on Thursday, Nov. 9, from 5:30 to 9 p.m. Honorees include Business of the Year, Tasha Haight; Entrepreneur of the Year, Elizabeth Decker; Non-profit of the Year, Delaware Discovery Museum; Citizen of the Year, Kate Patton; and Chamber Friend of the Year, Gary Murray. Cost is \$25 per person. Most options are chicken parmesan, shrimp scampi and pasta alfredo, prime-ven.

The banquet's theme is "Our Future Is Bright. We Gotta Wear Shades" so bright, festive attire is encouraged. Sponsorships and tickets are available at the Chamber Website.



Colby Phillips and pal from the North Pole.

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This year, Santa will talk about Gumdrop and Peppermint and what they have done over the last year. A coloring page will be included of Peppermint & gumdrop as well." Richard Ludwick of Captain's Cove drew the illustration of Peppermint & Gumdrop, and he drew them exactly as Santa & I had envisioned. These letters are free and community donations throughout the years of stamps and funding have contributed greatly. "I can't thank Thom Guylas & Emily Davis with Ace Printing in Berlin enough for their contribution and help in printing these letters and labels for me the past several years. I also appreciate the community and those who have donated stamps and funding for materials. It truly is only my time in stuffing and imagination of the story that I do at this point." To receive a letter from Santa, simply email [santaphillips@yahoo.com](mailto:santaphillips@yahoo.com) by November 15th and include the child's name and address. You can also request a letter for an adult but please specify traditional or humor as Santa can have a real sense of humor when he wants too. If children want to write a letter to Santa, which he loves, they can drop them off at the Ocean Pines post office or the Captain's Cove Marina Club front desk and Santa will reply with a special thank you included in the letter. "And don't worry Santa does not promise anything, especially iPhones, puppies or baby sisters!" For Phillips, continuing the tradition is a wonderful way to stay in touch with an old friend, who just happens to be made of pure Christmas magic. It also warms her heart to help share good tidings each year with hundreds of children. "I love the innocence of children," Phillips said. "Children really teach us about faith, believing in something they don't actually see with their own eyes, like Santa coming into their house at night. I feel that, in this day & age, if we can keep them believing in the miracle of Christmas and bring a smile to their face, then I have accomplished what I set out to do."

## Christmas Parade on the Horizon!

submitted by: Lt. Skip Lee

Riding on the wake of our successful St. Patrick's Day Parade experience, the Beach Patrol has entered the Ocean City Christmas Parade on December 2<sup>nd</sup> starting at 11:00am. If you would like to be part of the BP unit, please reach out to Skip Lee (443-618-6866) to let us know you'll be joining us that Saturday morning as we decorate our Quads and Pick Up Truck in all the festive colors and lights we have. We'll be taking the beach up to Old Landing Road to get into the queue and be a part of the 40-year tradition.

We need Quad Operators, route walkers to hand out Activity Books, and just fun people to be a part of the day. If you're a local and want to be in the parade, GREAT!! If you are planning to be in town that weekend and want to "jump" in to the fun, you are more than welcome. The

Parade Team this spring had a blast and we won the small unit division. No pressure on the Christmas Parade Team.

We hope to have as many of you who want to be involved as possible. Family members are welcome.

Merry Christmas Everyone!



**The Outdoor Tomorrow Foundation/Ocean City Beach Patrol Water Safety Curriculum Update**  
submitted by: SRT Nick Thompson

In 2022, we began to develop an Ocean City Beach Patrol beach and water safety curriculum. Lieutenant Kovacs, Public Education Coordinator Kristin Joson, and I met periodically throughout the year to develop a framework that would serve as a launching point to an elementary level five lesson unit. We continued to share ideas with a focus so that a student anywhere in the country receiving our message would find relevance to the material being instructed whether they are in a classroom, at a pool, river, lake or ocean. The project continues in 2023 as we are slotted to add OCBP's curriculum to The Outdoor Tomorrow Foundation's existing Canvas platform. Our goal is to have all lessons and units uploaded by January 2024. We will be developing a five-lesson unit for middle and high school students, as well. If you are interested in being added to the development team, please contact me at [natrescu@hotmail.com](mailto:natrescu@hotmail.com). Currently, over 2000 school systems in 50 states have adopted the use of The Tomorrow Foundations Curriculum. The possibilities of sharing our expertise and having a wider reach are endless in this passion project.

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## Ocean City Beach Patrol Water Safety Lessons COMING SOON!

HOME OUTDOOR ADVENTURES



0 ITEMS IN QUOTE

ORDER

SIGN IN

ABOUT OTF EVENTS BLOG + MEDIA SUPPORT

OUTDOOR ADVENTURES

**A Curriculum That Helps  
Kids Discover A Love Of  
The Great Outdoors.**





# OCBP News

## Fall Patrol and Extended Coverage

submitted by: Lt. Ward Kovacs

The 2023 season ended with a lot of new challenges for the Beach Patrol personnel who remained available through September and into October. We were asked to extend a.m. and p.m. quad patrols into October, and to have quads and rescue swimmers patrolling the beach during the day, while we had crews painting in three locations. During the Ocean's Calling concerts, we had additional quads and rescue swimmers working at the concert venue from 11:00 a.m. until 10:00 p.m. During both fall and extended coverage, strong rip currents led to numerous rescues. During one day, we responded to five rescues in Ocean City. While rip currents posed one challenge the rainy weather hampered our efforts to power wash and paint guard stands. But, with hard work, long hours we made it through the challenges and brought the 2023 season to a successful conclusion. Thanks go out to all those who worked whatever time they had available, whether it was part-time, after classes or on a full-time basis.

## PT-SRT Article

submitted by: Lt. Mike Stone

I wanted to thank all of the part-time SRTs who worked this past summer. During the summer of (2023) we had 27 PT personnel and they were ALL a big help as we worked to meet all of the normal scheduling challenges and demands that the Beach Patrol schedule presents. PT personnel helped to cover for AM/PM patrols, Camp Horizon, injured/sick SRTs, JBP, special duty, special request days off, testing, training, veteran recertification, and early or late season availability until some of our teachers finish school. Some even agreed to work extra days to assist covering FT personnel so they could attend both Regional, & National lifesaving competitions!

The PT personnel from 2023 are as follows; JW Abernathy, Frank Badders, Sam Bingaman, CC Summer Bingaman, Hunter Brown, CC Joe Bunke, Ryan Burroughs, Ryan Coalson, Julia Cope, Will Gough, Tony Handle, Alex Hufnagel, Connor Kick, Rick Krause, Jason Maccannon, Katie Monteferrante, Andrew Norris, Michael Norris, Devin Paquette, Dan Pogonowski, CC Patrick Reid, Miri Shorkey, Matt Slomba, Timmy Sullivan, Nick Thompson, Billy Turner, and Paul Vassalotti.

The past several summers we have been encouraging PT personnel to work early in the season to help until all of our FT teachers become available. A person applying for

a part time position must first be a returning guard in good standing. They should have been A-rated, passed semaphore, and be off probation. If they meet those basic criteria, they then must commit, in advance via Google Drive, to a minimum of 15 or more days between the Saturday of Memorial Day Weekend through Sunfest Sunday. Days after August 15<sup>th</sup> are also very helpful. Unless someone works every weekend from mid August through the end of September, 15 days is a tough number to reach. Some of the part-time personnel will take vacation time or work three- & four-day weekends to get their days in. We use August 15<sup>th</sup> as a preferred date for more part time work because that is when we start to see an increase in full time personnel returning to school (both students & teachers). That date helps give us personnel later in the season when we need them the most, and earn an additional \$1.00 hr.

If you are unable to return to the Beach Patrol in a full-time capacity then you may find yourself applying for one of those part time positions. Just remember that we are looking for at least **15 days** starting with either late May or early June availability or days after August 15<sup>th</sup>. The higher the number of days, the better chance of being offered a position. Another point to consider is that you are working days that you have committed to in advance. That means if you tell Lt. Stone you will be down to work then you will be on the schedule! **In other words, you are expected to follow through with your commitment.** Every effort will be made to assign PT personnel to a familiar/requested crew but assignments will be based on the needs of the Beach Patrol. It would be nice if every SRT could come back and work a full time but that is highly unlikely. Remember to let Lt. Stone know if you are interested in one of those part time positions.

**Captain's Note:** With the lowest number of full-time SRTs at any time in recent years, the PT SRTs made a huge impact on keeping our beaches safe. Our PT SRTs worked a combined 5,400 hours which translates to an additional 720 "guard days". What this meant to beach safety is that our PT staff added an average of 7 stands a day to our coverage. Just think about what it would have been like to have been even more spread out without those 7 stands, and thank a PT SRT.



# Off Season News

## International Lifeguarding

submitted by: CC Katie Zgorski

Each summer, the Ocean City Beach Patrol receives a number of J-1 visa student-workers most commonly hailing from the Canadian province of Québec. This year three more countries were added to the list of home nations of SRTs including Poland (PJ Lubecki), Kazakhstan (Pavel Pozdnyakov) and France (Lucas Savart). Several more SRTs had the opportunity of a lifetime to travel internationally for lifeguarding. Emma Bridges, Torey Hurst and Kyle Zgorski traveled to Australia this past winter to work as lifeguards for Surf Life Saving Queensland as part of the Australian Lifeguard Service. They trained and worked in the Sunshine Coast and the City of Townsville. After their time in Australia, Emma stopped by Santa Teresa, Costa Rica and volunteer lifeguarded there for the month of April following in the footprints of several past OCBP guards while Kyle took a scuba diving trip in Fiji and Hawaii and toured New Zealand. Crew Chief Patrick Reid also contributed to the international lifeguarding scene with his impactful work in Nicaragua. Reid worked with the International Surf Lifesaving Association to help train both instructors and cadets with the Nicaraguan Red Cross in surf rescue and safety. It was a 10-day course which concluded with the successful graduation of 33 lifeguards. While in Nicaragua, Reid also provided a specific training course on the OCBP Spinal Stabilization technique. Although not international, once again this year, a group of SRTs were able to represent OCBP and work with the Fort Lauderdale Ocean Rescue, as event lifeguards for the annual Fort Lauderdale Air Show weekend taking place on April 30. Paul Vassalotti, Emma Bridges, Kyle Zgorski, Tom Powell, Connor Lawrence, and Caroline Heller all made the trip to Ft. Lauderdale for this year's event. Continuing the international travel into this year, Robert Jett and Mike Amberman, both from crew 6, are working with the same organization in Australia and will be placed in Bundaberg and the Sunshine Coast, respectively. The Fort Lauderdale Air Show will be taking place on May 11-12 this year, so be on the lookout for news on that opportunity! Have a safe offseason, and happy travels!

**Captain's Note:** When you become involved with the Ocean City Beach Patrol, you become part of, not only our family, but part of a larger worldwide lifesaving community. One of the very unique characteristics of our Beach Patrol is the influence that we have had on lifesaving and scientific studies that make surf zone beaches safer around the world. As our SRTs traveled the globe not only did they take their expertise to others but have encouraged some of those they met to travel to Ocean City and spend a summer working for the best Beach Patrol in the world!

## Dive Team Update

submitted by: Sgt. Jamie Falcon

2023, our thirteenth year, was another good one for the OCBP Dive Team. On the dive trip, a dozen certifications were earned, the weather was perfect, and a good time was had by all. The weather for the oyster dive was not as cooperative. Originally, we had a group of eleven who paid for equipment and were ready to go. Steve Reddick, a former guard was going to bring his boat across Chesapeake Bay since my boat's occupancy is only eight. By the morning we had planned to go, there was a "marine warning" with wind gusts of 30 mph. Steve could not bring his boat across the bay safely, so we cancelled. But not completely; former SRT Reed and my family ran out with smaller, safer, numbers and quickly limited out on oysters. We were back at the boat ramp by 9:30 am, before the wind got terrible. The next weekend, we were able to get back out with the remaining Beach Patrol members who were still available, Emma Bridges, Katie Zgorski, Jack Hodos and former SRT Steve Reddick. We were able to get out on one boat and, again, limited out on oysters. The visibility and water temperature were exceptional this year. With the support of alumni, Steve Reddick, and an additional boat option, and weather cooperating, next year we should be able to take a much larger group.

**Captain's Note:** Please remember to mention SCUBA certification and other opportunities like this as you talk to prospective recruits. The Beach Patrol is far more than sitting in a stand from 10:00 – 5:30, it is a life changing, family experience.

## Off-Season Guards Assist with OCSC Surf into Integrity

submitted by: CC Alex Siegel



The Ocean City Surf Club hosts a variety of events and programs throughout the year. One of these programs is called Surf into Integrity. Students from Stephen Decatur Middle School can elect to take this afterschool

program. There is a weekly classroom session utilizing legendary surfer Shaun Tomson's book, "The Surfer's Code - 12 Simple Lessons for Riding Through Life". Following each week is a Sunday morning review and surf session where a variety of locals and volunteers contribute their time to help in the water and on the beach.

This fall, Crew Chief Alex Siegel and Sergeant Josh Wilder contributed by volunteering to be the lifeguards, taking the burden off the staff, and allowing them to focus more on the lessons and not just safety, which is always the top priority. Led by surf club president Tommy Vach (old school guard), Rusty Ruszin, Dave (Doc) Dalkiewicz, just to name a few, and many more. Siegel even





Pictured at Lake Phoenix: Connor Lawrence, Luke Ramina, Michael Young, Fiona Coleman, Anna Buonocore, Seth Hetherington, and Everett Brown

helped develop a portion of the curriculum in 2015 during the program's initial conception. Some of the days were just too big and heavy to do proper lessons, but even by just being there consistently there was overall gratitude and handshakes, which just shows how much respect the local community *does* have for the Ocean City Beach Patrol.

The program runs for six weeks, finishing on the first weekend of November. If you are in Ocean City next year during that time and want to help or contribute (several other guards have done this throughout the years) please reach out to either Siegel, Wilder, or to the Surf Club directly.

**Captain's Note:** Not only does the Ocean City Surf Club sponsor this valuable community program, but they are our major contributor to our award-winning Junior Beach Patrol program. During each of our 9 JBP weeklong camps they do a presentation on Fridays (competition and graduation day) and have donated new JBP paddle boards the last few seasons. In addition to their direct support of the program they also awarded the JBP program a special recognition at their annual banquet last spring. But their support didn't end here as they also provide a monetary donation to assist with the publication of our popular "Water and Beach Safety Coloring / Activity" book each year. Thank you, Ocean City Surf Club!



Pictured: front middle, President Tommy Vach and Crew Chief Siegel and SRT Callie Mull with the paddle board back row

## Calendar/Important 2024 Dates

Phone:(410) 289-7556  
OCBP Headquarters  
109 Talbot Street  
Ocean City, MD 21842

For correspondence please  
send to:  
Town of Ocean City  
PO box 158  
Ocean City, MD 21843  
Attention: Beach Patrol

Email: barbin@oceancitymd.gov



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Follow us on Facebook, and Instagram



**[www.ococean.com/ocbp](http://www.ococean.com/ocbp)**

### Do You Want OCBP License Plates?

If you do, you must complete the following:

- Obtain an application by requesting one
- Complete the application form with vehicle information and owner information
- Sign the application and send a check for \$50.00 back to Headquarters
- The Captain must sign off on approval and mail to the MVA.



### Important, Important!!!!

- In order to ensure your W2 and your tax refund get to you, contact City Hall with any corrections on your permanent address.
- Also contact Debi if your phone number, mailing address or email address changes. Dtyler@oceancitymd.gov

The mission of the Ocean City Beach Patrol is to provide for the safety and well-being of the beach patrons of the Town of Ocean City, Maryland, who participate in beach and ocean-related activities. This mission includes **educating** the public, **preventing** potential accidents, and **intervening** when necessary and appropriate, both on the beach and in the adjacent Atlantic Ocean waters. The Patrol intends to fulfill its mission by:

- Recruiting the most highly qualified candidates.
- Employing qualified individuals for administrative and educational positions, competent surf rescue technicians, and public-minded surfing beach facilitators.
- Training personnel with the most current information, technology and equipment.
- Outfitting personnel with current, well-maintained, and appropriate equipment.
- Upholding the highest standards of professionalism; to present knowledgeable, capable, and reliable Surf Rescue Technicians to the general public.

**January 1 (Mon)** - Penguin Plunge, Mayor's Open House

**March 3 (Sun)** - PEPSE Salisbury YMCA (reg. 10:00 - 10:45)

**March 9 (Sat)** TOC Job Fair is March 9

**March 17 (Sun)** - PEPSE York College, PA (reg. 10:00 - 10:45)

**March 23 (Sat)** Strategic Planning (Officers and Crew Chiefs)

**March 24 (Sun)** - PEPSE Richard A Henson Family YMCA (reg. 10:00 - 10:45)

**March 25 (Mon)** - Mailing of Spring Newsletter (official invitations to return included)

**April 7** - PEPSE Arundel Olympic Swim Center (reg. 10:00 - 10:45)

**April 25 (Thur)** - Employee Agreements due back with request for assignment and documentation of last day.

**April 27 (Sat)** - Officer mandatory mtg (ACC appointments and CC Promotions)

**April 28** - (Sun) PEPSE Ocean Pines (reg. 9:00 - 9:45)

**May 18-19 (Sat-Sun)** - Officer Work weekend, CC paperwork /check-in (no drug test on Sat)

**May 19 (Sun)** - Officer and CC Drug testing (9:00 - 10:30)

**May 19 (Sun)** - SRA I check-in (Drug test, paperwork, equipment, orientation)

**May 19 (Mon)** - May 30 (Sunday) - Surf Rescue Academy I

**May 21 (Tues) - May 26 (Fri)** - Returning staff drug test and paperwork check-in and equipment pick-up (Time slot will be scheduled)

**May 25 (Sat)** - 7:00 a.m. Prayer Service, 8:00 a.m. leadership meeting, 10:00 a.m. first day guarding

**May 27 (Memorial Day)** - 8:00 a.m. Weekly in-service mtg

**June 1 (Sat)** - PEPSE (final for 2024) Ocean City (registration 9:00 - 9:45)

**June 16 (Sun) - June 22 (Sunday)** - Surf Rescue Academy II

**June 25—June 29 (Tues - Sat)** - Veteran re-qualification and re-certification