

LIFE SAVER

Nickelsen was the first lifeguard hired in Cannon Beach

By ELAINE TRUCKE
Special to The Daily Astorian

HISTORIC
PHOTO OF THE WEEK

With the unpredictable Oregon Coast tides and sea of inexperienced summer swimmers, there is often a need for the Cannon Beach lifeguards.

While the program now often runs and trains in tandem with the Cannon Beach Fire Department, it can trace its roots back to down home beginnings.

The first lifeguard hired in Cannon Beach was Ted Nickelsen in 1938. A wealthy gentleman, W.W. Ross, promoted the lifeguard program. Ross, who was an avid surf bather, swam daily and recognized a need for seasonal lifeguard assistance.

Ross placed small contribution jars in local busi-

nesses and generated public support.

Nickelsen lobbied for, and was granted, assistance during the summers of 1939 and 1940. Nickelsen received \$3.00 a day and his assistants got \$2.00 a day.

At roughly 1000-yard intervals along the beach, the lifeguards placed coils of line with an attached life ring. In an emergency, lifeguards swam the rings to endangered swimmers, and citizens onshore helped in retrieving the lines. During his employ, Nickelsen and his assistants undertook about four or five rescues.

Nickelsen set up his post on the beach in front of the old Ecola Hotel. An enormous tree stump had washed ashore and lodged in front of the old building. Nickelsen placed a flag atop the stump and opened for business.

It wasn't until after World War II that a group of volunteers came together to start the Commercial Club. Established in 1947, the Commercial Club's first order of business was creating the local fire department and setting up a structured lifeguard program, among other things.

Elaine Trucke is the executive director of the Cannon Beach History Center and Museum.



Ted Nickelsen, lifeguard.

Courtesy of Cannon Beach History Center and Museum



9-1-WHAT?

THE BEST OF THE WORST CALLS TO ASTORIA 911 DISPATCH

Full service

We know Oregon's pot business is booming. But someone in Warrenton is taking customer service to a new level. Dropping off a bag of marijuana at the AT&T store? Now that is mobilizing your world ...

Follow reporter Kyle Spurr on his 9-1-What? Twitter watch, where a few of the sometimes head-scratching calls to area dispatch take center stage. The full feed is at www.twitter.com/9_1_WHAT.

9-1-WHAT? @9_1_WHAT Following

{2/16 @ 6:05 p.m.} A boy was ramming a shopping cart into the can return at Fred Meyer. The boy was upset he lost his cell phone. #Warrenton

9-1-WHAT? @9_1_WHAT

{2/17 @ 10:07 a.m.} Woman driving while smoking a joint. #Warrenton

7:51 AM - 18 Feb 2016

9-1-WHAT? @9_1_WHAT Following

{2/17 @ 2:13 p.m.} Customer at AT&T store came by and dropped off a bag of marijuana for an unknown reason. #Warrenton

7:53 AM - 18 Feb 2016

9-1-WHAT? @9_1_WHAT Following

{2/17 @ 1:10 p.m.} Report of a man in a tr screaming and yelling. #Seaside

11:14 AM - 22 Feb 2016

9-1-WHAT? @9_1_WHAT Following

{2/17 @ 4:41 p.m.} A child keeps coming out a window of a second story house and standing on the roof. #Astoria

7:55 AM - 18 Feb 2016

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