

THEN...HOW IT ALL BEGAN



Sometime around 1983 a group of locals started calling themselves the La Jolla Shores Longboard Association. No dues. No formalities. If you congregated in the second row of the Shores parking lot or hung out at a certain concrete bench on the boardwalk south of the bench claimed by the Rusty's short-boarders, you were probably a member.

"We were a band of brothers, the second row guys," says **Don Laughlin**, owner of Sea Brothers Surfboards and one of the youngest early members. LJSLA surfers had shared waves for years, with some friendships going back to high school. Their true bond was devotion to the Shores breaks which then included Lederman's (Archie's Left), Green Wall, White House, Vacant Lots, The Pier, and Secret Spot.

Members sported teeshirts, patches, and decals with a logo designed by **Dave Merriam**. (You can still see the old LJSLA decal on a few trucks in the second row.) Some members entered area surf contests and wore the patch out of loyalty, even though the Association

wasn't officially organized or registered.

Occasionally there were "meetings" at the Chart House with free Heineken and shrimp cocktails provided by member **Bob Andrews**, who was manager there at the time. On holidays, members partied at the Shores with barbecue grills, guitars, kids running around, beer and jungle juice. "Those were the days of dogs and cigarettes on the beach and coolers parked anywhere you wanted. Full on Big Wednesday," says musician **Kirk "Wardo" Ward**.

Then things got serious. In 1985 a plan surfaced to gerrymander the Shores surf and swim zones. The idea was to expand the swimming area, which would compress and push the surfing zone northward to the beginning of Green Wall, where the surf camps are today. If the City of San Diego adopted the plan, surfers would be exiled permanently from the best waves at La Jolla Shores.

LJSLA members helped circulate a petition against the plan which gathered over 2100 signatures. Wearing 3-piece suits, they stormed meetings of the La Jolla Shores [Homeowners] Association and the La Jolla Town Council to argue, and sometimes shout, their case. **Ron Jones** was quoted in the La Jolla Light comparing Shores surfers to American Indians banished to the reservations. "Suddenly we were a group of citizens concerned about saving the Shores," says Dave Merriam.

The surfers stood their ground, and the deal that



Photo courtesy of Neil Norris.

was struck has lasted. Life-guards can move the surf zone north, but only after 11 am, and only during summer and on the busiest warm weekends. "We had to mobilize and speak with one voice to save our beach because we remembered what happened at Dana Point," says Ron, a retired teacher. Many early members believe this activism galvanized the La Jolla Shores Longboard Association to take itself seriously.

The first official meeting was a year later on November 25, 1986 at **Greg Spaniol's** house. Dave Merriam presided as LJSLA's first president. The Environmental Committee proposed a donation to Surfrider Foundation. There was talk of marching in the La Jolla Christmas Parade. A Competition Committee was formed. Kirk Ward presented a color slide show of his fellow surfers on the waves. He was also nominated to be Historian, since he was the only one with a waterproof camera.



ABOVE: Doug Jones, Fred Stoughton, Ray Hedley, Fred Evans.



Former President of LJSLA, Dave "Patch" Merriam, in the lineup.