



Craig Money snakes Billy Henderson as Mike Harrow, Jim Byberg and Larry Holter paddle out at the "Hook". Photo/Singletary 1965

UNION DUES : A HISTORY OF THE LONGBOARD UNION

by Tom Hickenbottom

Since its inception in 1981, the Santa Cruz Longboard Union has been a multi-faceted organization.

The original purpose of the SCLU was to reunite all of the surfers who were members of the original local surf clubs of the sixties. Clubs like the Santa Cruz Surfing Association, Pleasure Point Surfing Association, West Wind Surf Club, East Cliff Surfing Alliance, Killer Cowells Surfing Affiliation, Oldies But Goodies, Northside Surf Club, and Younger But Better.

The first few meetings were a who's who of local surfing history, with sixties legends like Gene Hall, Danny Anderson, Gary Venturini, Tom Hoye, Alan Souza, George "Redo" Arris, and numerous other surf-stoked people who wanted to share one thing in common : a sense of tribal bonds that transformed time.

Since those early days, the SCLU has also transformed in many other ways under the leadership of all the club presidents; Dave Preovolos, Geoff McCormack, Denny Taku and the present leader, Ron "Decade" Lindsay. Current president Lindsay sees a bright future for the SCLU, "We've seen a lot of growth in the past 12 years, but we're now getting back to the family and community involvement roots."

The SCLU has raised tens of thousands of dollars for local organizations like the Surfrider Foundation, The Junior Lifeguards, Santa Cruz Surfing Museum and the High School Surf League.

"We're proud of our commitment to bolstering these programs," says Lindsay, "and we're going to keep on doing it into the future."

The SCLU was one of the first "modern day" clubs to organize since the resurgence of the "modern longboard" in the early '80's. A handful of us had kept riding our "old planks" along with our shortboards throughout the entire '60's and '70's. We were definitely a minority when the advent of the shortboard came onto the scene. But deep down inside, the memories and stoke for those long nose rides and stylish moves had to be preserved!

Around 1980, some of us were living in Hawaii where the longboard was again being taken serious as a viable wave riding machine. The advent of lighter foam, coupled with modern lightweight glassing materials, was what turned the times around. No longer did we have to ride those "heavy old logs" we had kept in our quivers.

The era of "the modern longboard" was spawn. Some of us, still in "the islands," began to tell our friends on the "mainland" what was happening. Within a year, all of the local shapers were cranking out newly developed models. Master shapers, Doug Haut, John Mel and Bob Pearson got involved early on, creating different designs for a multitude of "restoked longboarders."

For me, the greatest influence of the modern longboard was the reinvolve-

ment of a lot of sixties surfers who gave up the sport during the short board era. I'd be paddling out at Indicators and see faces in the water I hadn't seen for 15 years!

It was merely a short time later that the SCLU was formed. Everybody caught the fever! Instead of all belonging to different local factions, we were then all a part of one cohesive club. The times had changed dramatically. In the old days, I never would've sat at the same table with "Pleasure Point guys," much less think about being in the same club with them! Back then, territory and club identity were strong and competitive.

But the times had changed and we had changed. We had all been through a gamut of life experiences and had no time or ambition to rekindle the old ways. It was time to all get together as one fraternal organization.

Since those early days, however, the SCLU has kept on growing. A new set of faces, (as well as the old) are now actively involved in all of the clubs happenings. The SCLU has family fun days, surf expression sessions, camping trips, as well as a constituency of competitive surfers and paddlers.

The SCLU is now, as it always has been, a positive force in local and family affairs. And if the past is any reflection on the future, the SCLU will go on to remain one of most positive forces in the Santa Cruz community.

