

### *"Fast Eddie" Nelson*

*As a youngster, I didn't realize it at the time, but I spent a good part of my life on vacation. I would stay at the beach near Avenue C all day long. We played volleyball until we were hot and tired, then go surf until we were cold (no wet suits yet, then go lie in the sand to rest up and do it all over again. The Lifeguards at Avenue C at this time, the 1950's, were led by Nate Shargo and I also remember Toby Erlinger, George Chalekson, Dick Keelor, Cliff Hugoboom and Walt Hetz. They were always good to me and they seemed to enjoy their work.*

*During this time I had part-time jobs mowing lawns, delivering Fuller Brush products and working in the flower fields of Palos Verdes. It was coming from these jobs to the beach that made me realize I could Lifeguard instead and work with a great group of people. In 1957 when I was 17 I took the County pool test and worked at Alondra Park for three years. It was fun working there and the pay was good, \$1.42 an hour. But I wanted to be a Lifeguard at Avenue C. I took the beach test when I turned 18 and came in #26 in the swim, but they only hired 25. I joined the swim team at U.C.S.B. with Gibby Gibson in 1960 and we drove down to Hermosa, took the test and were hired. I finally got to be Lifeguard at Avenue C. My two children, Erik and Jennifer, got to spend a lot of their early years enjoying the beach there as well.*

*All of these years later I look back with special memories of Lifeguarding and especially the fellow Lifeguards for and with whom I had the privilege of working. They are what make it a great job. One of the few times I remember feeling uneasy/scared was going to Rocky Point, off of Palos Verdes. Skipper Wally Hapke, Dave Albinus and I went there on Baywatch Redondo to rescue two boaters who picked a bad day to go fishing in a small outboard. It was during a storm that had such big surf that it took out the Portofino Inn and a few other structures. Wally had to point the bow of the Baywatch into the swells to keep us upright. There was no way we could get the two boat occupants onto our boat because of the rough seas. While we were towing them a wave caught their boat and like a pendulum brought it abeam of us. They had one thrilling ride back to King Harbor, which was quite rough itself at that time.*

*I am glad that my family decided to get into Lifeguarding and can share some of the great memories that I have had.*