



Bob Scully,
Curator

Notes from the Wildwood Historical Society

located at 3907 Pacific Ave. in Wildwood.
609-523-0277



SUMMER HOURS 9:00 AM to 2:00 PM
Every Day except Sundays
and National Holidays

Do you remember a time when in-ground pools were a rarity on our island? In fact, to the best of our records, the only one in existence for a long time was **Sportland Pool** on the Boardwalk at 24th Street. We have photos dating back to the late 1920s and 30s where you could "dine, dance and swim." A 1932 advertisement for Sportland offers a locker, towel, shower, pool and surf bathing for .25 cents. The **Sportland Hofbrau** offered a lobster dinner for \$1.00 and steak platters for .75 cents. By 1934, it appears there was alcohol served on the North Wildwood Boardwalk at **Sportland's Wonder Bar** and **Outdoor Dance Gardens**. The **Cape May County Beverage Company** supplied Sportland with "Camden" and "Schlitz" beer.

By the 1950s the alcohol had disappeared from the scene and Sportland Pool became a big part in the lives of Wildwood grade school kids. I asked around and found that **Mary Carlson** and **Floss Stingel** of North Wildwood remembered that the pool offered free swim lessons for one week in June after schools let out. **Dorothy Kulisek**, editor of this publication, was exuberant as she regaled me with tales of this place in the sun. Dorothy said, "I have wonderful memories of **Sportland Pool** as I spent much of my childhood summers there. My brothers and sisters and cousins would all go to the beach in the mornings and then ride our bikes to Sportland for the afternoons. Our parents bought us summer passes every year. Back then our lives were one long, hot summer, carefree day. Dorothy happily remembered "the invisible stamp we would get put on the tops of our hands and have to put it under the light to get in and

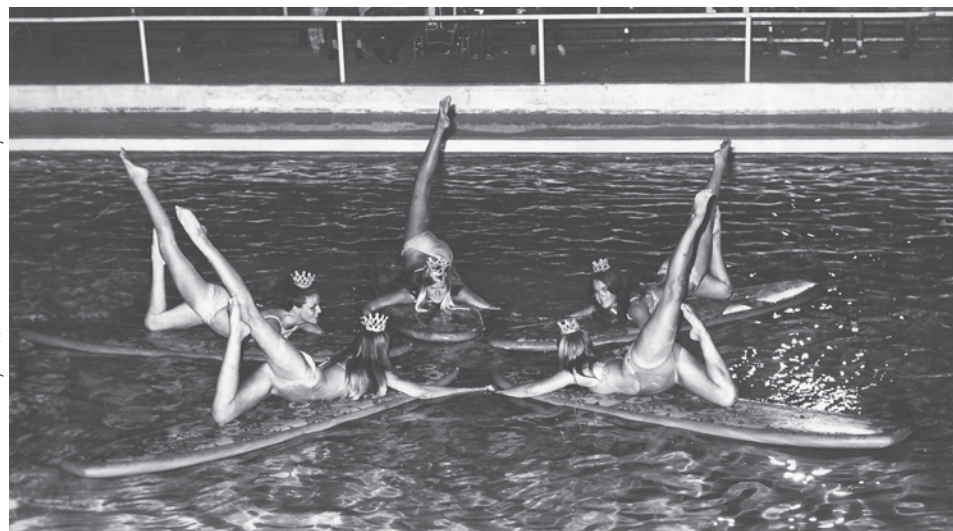
out of the pool. I have vivid memories of my father playing the Rolling Stones, "I Can't Get No Satisfaction" on the jukebox. The jukebox was at the end of the pool up on the bandstand. They were also very strict there. If you had something to eat, the lifeguards would make us sit on the bleachers for 10 minutes before we could go back in the pool," Dorothy said. "When I think of Sportland Pool, it makes me smile inside," she said.

Later on, in the late 60s and 70s, Sportland Pool offered entertainment in the form of "Aqua Circus." It was a water show complete with an assortment of high divers, "Aqua Maniacs" (clown divers) and "Aqua Maids" who wowed us with their synchronized swimming. A poster announced a charge of \$2.75 for adults and \$1.50 for children. I can remember making the Boardwalk trek with my sister, my mom and all the children in tow to see the water show. I also remember that on a typical summer night, when a gentle breeze came off the ocean, you could hear a Boardwalk hawker calling repetitiously, "Aqua Circus, Aqua Circus" blocks away. You could drift off to sleep listening to the noises of the boardwalk wafting through the bedroom window in a cacophony of sounds that included screams from the Boardwalk rides; all this before the days of central air!

For sure, summer's here and it's time to remember the Wildwood Historical Society is now open six days a week, Monday through Saturday, 9:00 AM to 2:00 PM. Stop in and see our collection of memorabilia on Sportland Pier and Aqua Circus. You won't be sorry. Have a great Summer!

Anne Vinci,

PRESIDENT OF WILDWOOD HISTORICAL SOCIETY, INC.



AquaMaids performing water ballet at a nightly performance.

A Blast From the Past!

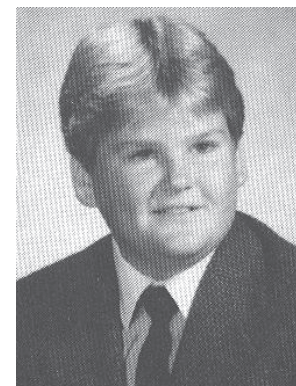
PHOTOS COURTESY OF WILDWOOD HISTORIC SOCIETY



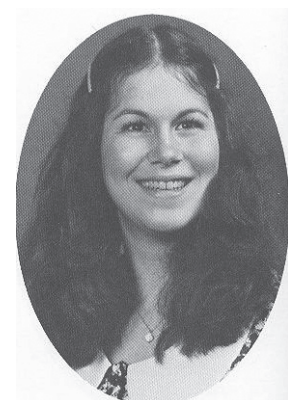
Maryanne Casale
WCHS 1970



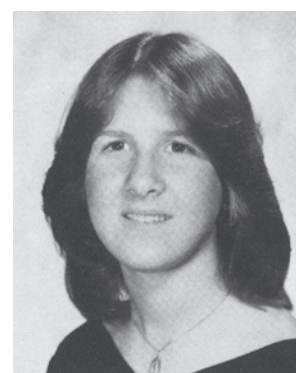
Vera Trombetta
WHS 1978



Bernard Kane
WCHS 1985



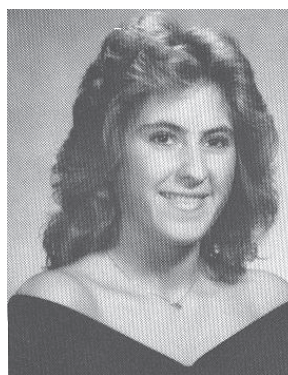
Maureen Dole
WCHS 1974



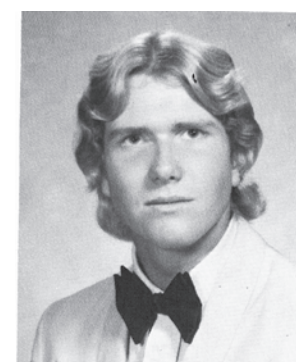
Rhoda Piccirilli
WCHS 1979



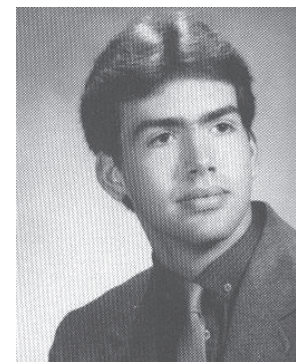
Richard Sanguinetti
WHS 1978



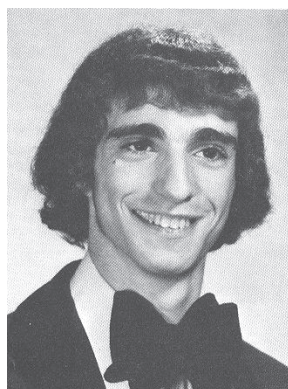
Dawn DiDonato
WCHS 1985



Frank Koester
WHS 1975



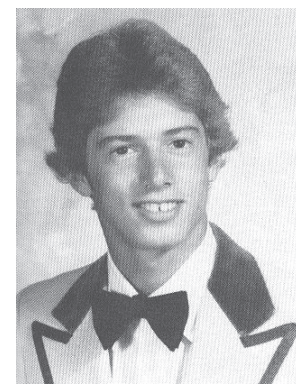
James Kurtz
WCHS 1985



Frank Montefusco
WHS 1978



Janine Biedzian
WCHS 1985



Ben Lauriello
WHS 1983