Delaware

Surfgimp Foundation hosts first fundraiser for athletes

Adam Duvernay
Delaware News Journal
USA TODAY NETWORK

To honor the legacy of a Delaware surfer who defied the odds, his friends — the ones who got him back on top of the waves — are working to help other athletes do the same.

Jay Liesener died last year, but he left behind the group of locals and surf enthusiasts who put the paralyzed man back on his board. On Sunday, the coalition known as Team Surfgimp, held its first fundraiser for their new charitable foundation.

After boiling up about 600 pounds of Louisiana crawfish at Cape Henlopen State Park, restaurateurs from Po' Boys Creole & Fresh Catch and 200 supporters feasted. All the day's proceeds supported Team Surfgimp Charitable Foundation for adaptive athletes, those who still want to ride and surf and swim and race despite disabilities.

The event sold out at $40 a head for adults, and that money, along with donations collected since the foundation formed in December, will be put to work paying for the travel and equipment of athletes applying for the charity's grants.

"Jay knew his time was limited," said Foundation Board Member Jack Frederick, a surfer and a longtime member of Team Surfgimp. "He was really compassionate, and he was really an absolute pioneer in being an adaptive athlete. He was just trying to make things better for people following him. There are so many challenges in his condition."

Liesener broke his neck at 17, which made living his passion for surfing impossible. It was almost 20 years later that Liesener found an organization called Life Rolls On and its program They Will Surf Again, and he rode waves again at Virginia Beach.

He returned home to Milton and established Team Surfgimp, who became the logistical and life-saving parts of his new surf adventures. By the time Liesener died, the team consisted of between 80-100 people dedicated to putting their friend in the water.

"Whatever we could do to help Jay get in the water, we would be there," Frederick said. "We consider ourselves a sand family, but it grew bigger and bigger every season."

That meant getting Liesener to the beach and onto a modified surfboard, and then making sure to get him to safety when he wiped out, Frederick said.

Volunteers boil shrimp Sunday for fundraiser held by Team Surfgimp and a new foundation honoring Milton surfer Jay Liesener. JACK FREDERICK

"By the last three or four seasons, it was every weekend," Frederick said. "The water is therapeutic. That's where we go to get our therapy and our freedom. And for him that's what it was all about — getting out of that chair and getting on the board."

Team Surfgimp members Melissa and Mike Clampitt were family friends with Liesener and his wife, and said he often ate at their restaurant, Po' Boys Creole & Fresh Catch.

They'd always wanted to host an authentic Louisiana crawfish boil, something costly and logistically challenging because it required shipping live crustaceans from the Bayou State. So when the Foundation started up, the restaurateurs saw their chance to make it count.

"There's a lot of people who've never heard of him before," said Melissa Clampitt. "It's bringing awareness that this foundation is out there, which is what we really wanted,"

The crawfish boil was billed as the "first annual," and the Clampitts want to support the Foundation as it grows and begins to carry out its mission.

To support the Foundation, visit their website or mail checks to Team Surfgimp Charitable Organization, PO Box 5153 Arlington, VA, 22205.

POLICE & FIRE

KENT COUNTY

STABBING SUSPECT: State police are looking for a **Dover** man who they believe stabbed someone after an argument early Sunday morning in an apartment complex parking lot. Troopers responded to Dover Estates, 51 Webb Lane, around 2 a.m. concerning a fight in progress, police said. There was a victim at the scene who'd been stabbed, police said, and the victim was taken to an area hospital to have the serious injury treated. Police said they identified Woodly Clairvoyant, a 27-year-old from Dover, as a suspect. A preliminary investigation into the stabbing told police Clairvoyant was walking through the complex lot when the victim pulled up. Police said they argued and Clairvoyant grabbed a concealed object, using it to stab the victim before fleeing. Police said Clairvoyant threatened to kill the victim during the assault. No one else was hurt, police said. Police obtained arrest warrants for Clairvoyant on the charges of felony assault and terroristic threatening. Anyone with information about his location can contact stae police at 302-698-8514.

SUSSEX COUNTY

SERIOUS CRASH: State police are investigating a serious crash which happened in **Ellendale** around 4 a.m. Saturday, and police believe alcohol was involved. Police said a 57-year-old Ellendale man was driving a 2003 Hyundai Sonata southbound on South Old State Road approaching the intersection with DuPont Boulevard when he drifted off the roadway. The vehicle began to rotate and struck a tree stump, police said. The driver exited the vehicle and collapsed a short distance away, police said. He was transported to Bayhealth Milford Memorial Hospital before being transferred to the Christiana Hospital with life-threatening injuries, police said. That part of South Old State Road was closed for about two hours, police said.

DELAWARE LOTTERIES

SATURDAY'S DRAWINGS:
Play 3 Day **4-6-2**
Play 4 Day **4-2-0-1**
Play 3 Night **9-6-7**
Play 4 Night 8**-4-7-6**

Lotto America **05-13-14-44-50**
Starball **02**
Bonus multiplier **2X**
Powerball **23-25-37-44-64**
Powerball **07**
Power Play **4X**

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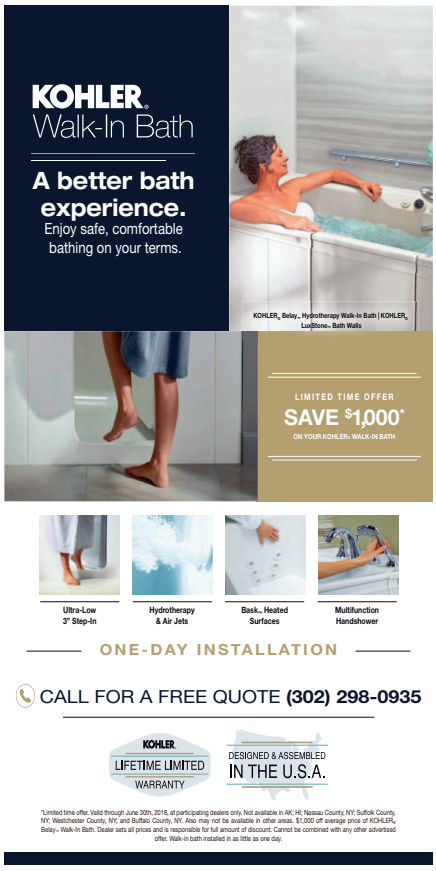

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