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Nine older surfers embrace the waves in annual surf movie benefit

By *Jean Bartlett* | *Pacifica Tribune Correspondent*

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On Saturday, April 20, Pacifica will hold its Earth Day celebration. Headed up by the Pacifica Beach Coalition, this annual PBC event increasingly brings out thousands of volunteers (6,000 in 2010, 7,200 in 2011 and 8,100 in 2012), to plant trees, create or regenerate gardens, work on habitat restoration and do planned cleanups and projects throughout the City's streets, shopping centers, beaches and bluffs. Those same three years generated 42,200 pounds of volunteer recovered trash and recycle — 11,000 pounds in 2010, 15,000 in 2011 and 16,200 in 2012.

On Friday night, Feb. 22, PBC will hold its fifth annual benefit screening for PBC's Earth Day event, with the presentation of "Surfing for Life." Written and directed by three-time Emmy Award-winning documentary filmmaker David L. Brown and co-produced by Brown and gerontological social worker and avid surfer, Roy Earnest — also a Pacifican and one of the co-founders of the Pedro Point Surf Club in Pacifica — the film was released in 1999, went on to broadcast on over 130 PBS stations, screened theatrically in 40 cities, and was the recipient of 15 international awards.

Currently in the process of finishing up two documentaries — "Going the Distance: Journeys of Recovery" (a film chronicling survivors of traumatic brain injury), and "Keeper of the Beat" (a film on the life and music of 67 year old drummer, composer, teacher and peacemaker Barbara Borden) — Brown talked about "Surfing for Life" from his film and production company in Brisbane (CA).

"The film was conceived by Roy and me, as a film about healthy aging," Brown said, "about having a rich, well-spent life when one is older. These particular seniors follow their bliss through surfing, and following one's 'bliss' is a key ingredient to a healthy life, along with one's attitude on their

own aging, being part of community and being in loving relationships. These were among the very strong elements we built the film around." The film shot in Northern California, Southern California, Maui and Oahu, also touches on conflict and regret, and in one surfer's case, struggling to come to grips with the fact that he can no longer surf the 25-foot waves, and must find his "bliss" in the 10-foot waves. Included among the 1999 film's surfers, and their ages at the time, are Fred Van Dyke, 70, a legendary pioneer of big wave surfing, Dr. Shay Bintliff, 64, an emergency room physician and mother of two, Woody Brown, 88, Hawaiian big wave surf hero of the 40s, national flying hero in the 30s and catamaran inventor, and John H. "Doc" Ball, 93, the oldest living American surfer, who at the time of the film was still surfing without a wetsuit in Shelter Cove, in addition to skateboarding.

"There is so much I learned from making this film," Brown said. "The friendships between these surfers and the joys of their extended family through surfing, is very moving." Brown has kept in touch with all the seniors, and has done tribute videos on four who have since passed, including Woody and Doc.

"Woody lived to be 96 and was very active until a few weeks before he packed it away," Brown said. "Also true for Doc Ball who was skateboarding till a week before he died." Brown will be attending the Pacifica Beach Coalition's surf movie benefit and said he is very supportive of the organization's work. A project of Pacifica's Environmental Family, a registered nonprofit organization that supports and provides fiscal sponsorship to local environmental projects in Pacifica, the Pacifica Beach Coalition is dedicated to preserving the ocean, coastal habitat and wildlife, and ending litter, through advocacy, education, community building, and citizen action.

Lynn Adams, President of and Environmental Organizer for the PBC, said that every dollar raised from the annual surf movie, is spent on Pacifica's Earth Day event. This year, worldwide, Earth Day places an extra focus on protecting sharks from overexploitation — overfishing, finning and

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bycatch. As such, some of the money raised from the movie will go directly into Pacifica classrooms.

"We will bring an assembly to every Pacifica school with (shark expert) David McGuire or (marine biologist, campaigner and investigator) Chris Pincetich, to teach the kids about this year's honoree, the shark, and to inspire them to take action for Earth Day and for life," Adams said.

Adams also noted money raised, via surf film night, will be used for PBC's educational giveaways. "These are given to each student and volunteer and includes Earth Hero 'collector' buttons, bookmarks, pencils and a reusable tote bag in honor of the Plastic Bag Ban that takes effect on Earth Day," Adams said. Money will also go to the festival which follows the event (held at Linda Mar State Beach), to help cover the cost of music, stages, posters, flyers, etc. Adams additionally thanked Greg Cochran and the Pedro Point Surf Club for making this event happen.

"Change is inevitable," notes the emergency room doctor surfer in "Surfing for Life." "It's the growth that is optional."

If you go:

Event: "Surfing for Life," a film by David L. Brown and Roy Earnest, benefit screening for PBC's Earth Day Where: Pacifica Performances Mildred Owen Concert Hall, 1220 Linda Mar Blvd.

When: Friday, Feb. 22. Two showings – 6 p.m. and 8:30 p.m.

Additional: Raffle prizes and no host wine and beer Tickets: \$15 in advance (recommended, prior years were sell outs). \$20 at door, \$10 for 16 and under and seniors (65+). Available at Sonlight Surf Shop, 575 Crespi Drive, Café Pacifica, 1821 Palmetto Ave., or online at www.pacificabeachcoalition.org (<http://www.pacificabeachcoalition.org>)

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