

Brothers Team Up To Get Money For Pier By Paddling To Catalina



Independent Photo By Lisa Beth Guntz

STRONG-ARM EFFORT — Brothers Beau and Shawn McCraney will provide the muscle power for the "Catalina Paddle."

By Greg Hernandez

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When the Huntington Beach Municipal Pier closed in 1988, Shawn, Beau and Jeff McCraney mourned the loss of the city's most famous landmark.

The brothers grew up at the beach, spending endless summer days frolicking in the surf and hanging out on the pier.

This weekend, the siblings will channel their nostalgia in an enterprising fundraiser for the pier they have dubbed the "Catalina Paddle."

Shawn, 28, and Beau, 18, will paddle the 45-mile round trip on 10-foot paddle boards while Jeff, 33, drives their boat.

They are hoping the gesture will prompt at least \$2,000 in new donations for the pier, which city officials estimate will cost approximately \$11 million to build.

"We feel a connection with the pier. It's one of the most important parts of Huntington Beach," said Shawn, a graduate of Edison High School.

The brothers began to plan their project about three months ago after Beau completed a similar feat on behalf of battered kids in Huntington Beach.

"Once he did it, we thought we had to do it. We decided to do it as brothers before we get too old," Shawn said.

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Paddle

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Shawn and Beau are no strangers to the water since both participated in the Huntington Beach Junior Lifeguard program as teens. Shawn went on to compete at Edison and at Brigham Young University, and Beau is a lifeguard at Huntington State Beach.

Despite their experience, Shawn said recent shark attacks have caused him some trepidation.

"I have a tremendous fear of sharks, but I'm not going to think about it. The chances are so slim."

The brothers will leave from Point Fermin, near the Palos Verdes area at 3 a.m. Friday. They hope to paddle to Catalina in eight hours. They will rest until 3 a.m. Saturday before paddling back, and plan on arriving back at the Huntington Beach pier around noon.

PIER Group President Tom Bagshaw said he is pleased to see the brothers take the initiative.

"It's real nice that someone wants to do an individual effort like this."

Donations can be mailed to: PIER Group, P.O. Box 471, Huntington Beach 92648, or can be dropped off at the group's headquarters at 322 Fifth St.

For more information, call 960-8497.