

Bruce Stephens on the Spoken Word

By Kyle Van Buskirk

Surf poet Bruce Stephens has been living and surfing in Encinitas for over 30 years, with the exception of a few years spent on the Big Island of Hawaii. Born and raised in LA and Pasadena, he started surfing down here on safari from high school. He and his wife, Amy, has owned and operated Well Within Traditional Healing Arts, at 555 Second St., in Encinitas for nearly 10 years (www.wellwithin.us).

His new book, *The One True Fun*, is a 50-page collection of his own poetry and prose, with some colorful images by local photographers Bill Wechter, Griffin McCabe, Steve Barilotti, Bella Martin, and artist, Kindra Gutt. It's available for purchase at: www.truefunpublishing.com.

"I was always into poetry, even as a kid. I remember we had this anthology, 101 Great American Poets. Then, about 10

years ago, at the Esmeralda Book Store in Del Mar (since closed), I heard the poet, Quincy Troupe. He had rhythm and flow; it was like jazz," Stephens said. Spoken word and slam poetry are his favorites, as well as Beats: Ferlinghetti, Kerouac, and Ginsberg. Other favorites include: Neruda, Ho Xua Hong, Kefir, Hafiz, and Rumi.

"Surfing's one of the most poetic things I do. I've always been inspired by water. Now we have a burgeoning spoken word community here in North County. There's a poetry slam at La Paloma Theatre, held by the Full Moon Poets [that] happens twice a year," said Stephens, who made it into the final round the last two slams.

The names of 17 contestants are drawn from a hat and five judges are picked from the audience, Stephens explained. The judges score each reading, based on content and delivery on a scale from 1 to 10.

He got the moniker "Surf Poet," from



Bruce Stephens. Courtesy photo.

the poetry slams. "Usually at least two of my poems involve surfing so that's how they refer to me," Stephens said.

He made the finals for good reason. Stephens is a dynamic and passionate orator. As I listened to him read his poem, "People Worship What They Will," it occurred to me that the poem, like much of Stephens work, should be read out loud, and if possible, by him. Perhaps someday he'll include, with his book, an audio recording of his performance reading.

The Surf Fur: Rip It. Wrap It.

By Kyle Van Buskirk

Surf Fur is a new solution to the long standing problem of frigid dawn patrols.

"I was out surfing one February morning in Orange County, where I used to coach a girl's surf team, when it occurred to me: half the class would be wearing Uggs and blankets, and no one wanted to be up or out that early. It was just too cold," said Cynthia Issel, inventor of Surf Fur.

While some would attribute the girls' behavior to normal teenage laziness, Issel's mind began working on a solution.

"I decided to design something that you can just throw on before and after surfing and not have to take off your wet-suit or get your car seats wet," Issel said.

That was three years ago. "We've gone through samples and prototypes, and talked to surfers, divers, kayakers, sailors, fishermen, etc. We're up to our fifth design now," Issel said.

But why should it be so difficult? If kids are showing up wearing blankets, it can't be a matter of high fashion.

"Actually, it had to be cool, because surfers are the last to look like geeks at the

beach," said Issel, who has a background in merchandising management and earned a fashion degree in Chicago.

She originally wanted to be a buyer but after she moved to Italy she decided teaching might be more fun.

Issel never expected to be using her fashion degree again, but Surf Fur is nearly finished and she is preparing to release it in time for Christmas 2007.

"We've got a patent pending, a cool logo, and new variations on it. We've been to surf shows, partnered with surf teams and even dive trips in Catalina," Issel said.

The Surf Fur is made of poly fleece, so it's windproof, water resistant, and breathable. It dries very quickly, while maintaining body heat without overheating, and was designed with a surfer's hooded sweat-shirt in mind.

"The body loses heat 10 times faster in water than in air. So the Surf Fur is great for throwing on between dives or surf sessions, and to protect people from exposure and hypothermia. It really helps maintain higher body temperatures," Issel said.

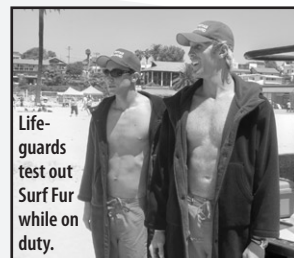
Issel, Originally from Chicago, said her teaching background has taught her

how to run a business. Surf Fur is modeled after Patagonia and Issel pledges to give back one percent of all profits to help the environment. She also pledges to work with schools, surf teams and ocean environmentalists.

"The ocean is a very important part of our lives," Issel said. She and her husband, Zenon, an engineer originally from Toronto, met while surfing at Tourmaline and were married in a small ceremony there.

Currently, they live in Leucadia. "It's paradise," said Issel, who calls Ponto the couple's home break.

After a reporter tried on a sample of Surf Fur he was reluctant to give it back. Industry pros and buyers should look for the Surf Fur at the Action Sports Retailer trade show in September. They'll have some samples there and might even unveil a top-secret variation. "It's awesome. There's nothing like it out there," Issel said. Check it out for yourself at www.surf-fur.com.



Life-guards test out Surf Fur while on duty.