

# You Needn't Freeze Swimming During Chilly Winter Months

By Walter Trabing

I went swimming in the ocean the other day and found it as warm as a Saturday night bath.

It took a little more than the five millimeter thickness of my own skin, however, to achieve this phenomenon.

I had the help of science to block out the numbing effects of this wintry weather and cold water which reverses the multi-million dollar summer beach trade here each year.

Before the swim I had snaked into a rubbery substance called foam neoprene made into a skin tight suit by a sturdily-built gent named Jack O'Neill.

O'Neill and three partners are now manufacturing these custom made second skins for skin divers, navy frogmen, commercial divers and water sportsmen.

They are turning out about 60 a month at their Live Oak factory, having recently moved their operation here from San Francisco. The O'Neills also maintain a retail suit and surf board shop at 98 Beach street, overlooking Cowell's beach.

This rubber suit fits over your swimsuit. By fits I mean you have to sprinkle a little "sliding" powder over your body, then go into sort of a fitty dance to get it on.

Also by fits I mean it's sort of a head to toe girdle and improves your figure about 20 pounds.

The material is unicellular, which means its cells are independent and therefore waterproof. Once incarcerated you feel vaguely like an unopened can of beer that's been shook up.

Then comes the fantasy-like experience of walking out onto the beach and into the icy water. True to old Pavlov's law of conditioned reflexes the alarm goes out for the massive appearance of goose pimples, but it turns out to be a false alarm.

There is no sensation of coldness, only the slight pressure of water against the suit.

Unlike the old type suits, said O'Neill, this one is made with special underarm material fittings which gives the swimmer complete freedom of arm movement.

A full suit, according to O'Neill, weighs about four pounds. This includes pants which come up to the chest, the pullover jacket, head gear, gloves and "boots."

The sensation is that you are as boyant as a cork. To dramatize this O'Neill brought out some newspapers and we laid back in the water as in an a sofa and read with perfect relaxation.

He said the suits run from \$35 to \$70. His partners in the venture are his brothers, Bob and Bill, and Dave Devine, swim coach at Watsonville high school.

The material is pieced into suit form by a special cement. Sharp finger nails or rocks can tear it, but O'Neill said it was easily patched. One man can make two suits a day.

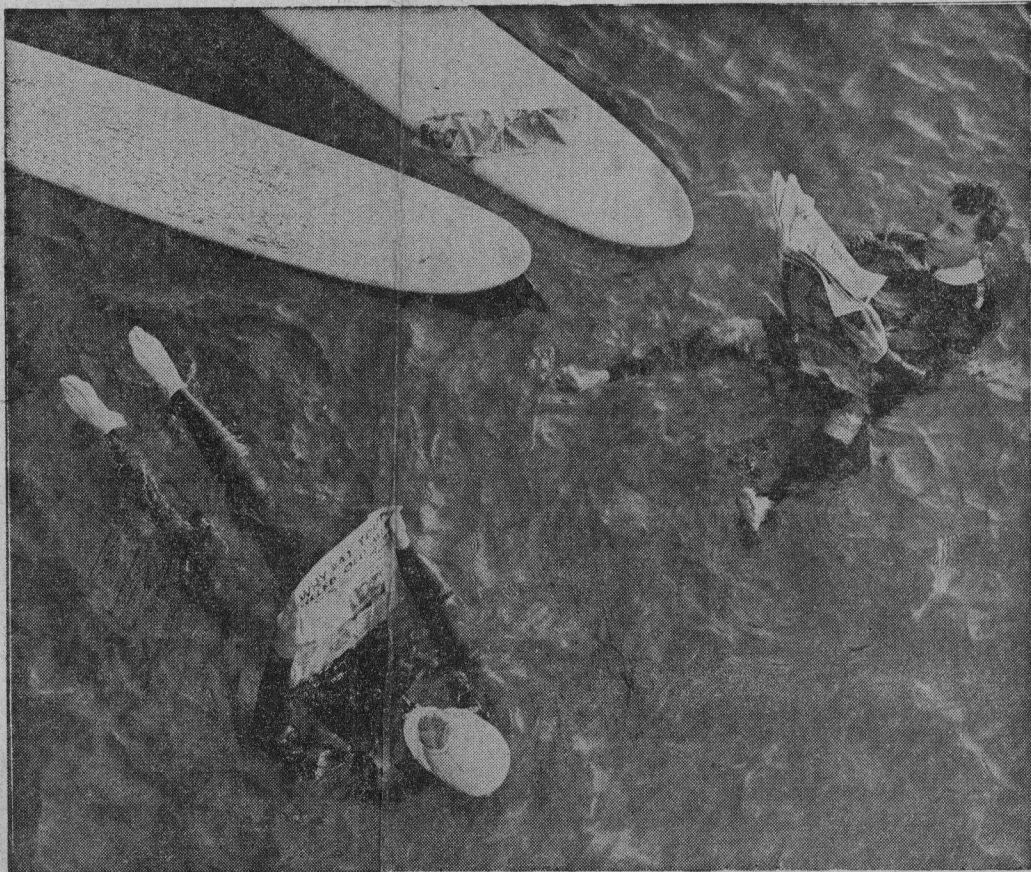
Using the suits for surf boarding, an occasional pin prick of cold water shoots in round the neck and wrists when tumbled by a wave, but the natural body heat soon converts this into warmth.

O'Neill claims that Santa Cruz has one of the best surfing areas on the Pacific coast in the winter.

He said the suits, which can be made for men, women and children, are ideal for winter swimming and exercise.

The only disconcerting experience of the three-hour swim was

## Catching Up On The News



a seal which tried to get intimate at Pleasure Point. It treaded water about 10 yards away and stared in utter fascination.

If the late (1882) Charles Robert Darwin could have viewed the scene he most likely would have said: "I told you so."

Jack O'Neill, right, manufacturer of custom made neoprene water suits in Santa Cruz, and Wally Trabing, Sentinel reporter, catch up on the news while floating comfortably in the icy ocean waters off Cowell beach.

Because of the scientifically developed material the wearer can remain in cold water for hours and keep warm and cozy. Photo was taken from the municipal wharf.

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## New 22-Lot Subdivision To Be Built In Capitola

Tentative plans for a 22-lot subdivision presented at a meeting of the

Laurens committee which will continue in the Pine Street apple orchard.

After the plan is approved, plans will be submitted for reconsideration by the council.

In other amendments of advertising was approved and prepared by the city council.

The material city council is setting for at the city.

The city also grants a mission to the office at the avenue. The zoning variance David for a lot near the Capitola station joins the T property man and is ment.

Other things before the city include the setting of a property chise procedure benches placed by Abigail

## County To Conduct Rabies Vaccination Clinic For Dogs