

from_saving to saving:

78-year-old. retired priest may be world's oldest lifeguard

By Lee Nelson QUAD-CITY TIMES

He twists his tanned waist and arms in the crystal blue water. The lyrics, "Rock and roll is here to stay."

plays from the cassette player nearby "OK, ladies. Let's do jumping jacks now," James "Jay" Janssen says to the women in the pool. "Push the water down with your hands." His sunglasses and baseball cap guard him from the harsh sun rays as he gracefully leaps in the pool.

Janssen recorded many of the oldies but goodies music himself from his large collection of 45 RPM records. He loves the old rock and roll-

'He's a scream to be around. I've had both hips replaced. and this helps so much. I love it.'

DOETTA

stars such as Chuck Berry and Jerry Lee Lewis because they have a fervent beat. The music helps him and his water aerobics' class get into a spirited mood to tighten and tone their bodies.

It's 8 a.m., and James is full of energy already. That might be difficult for many people his months, he'll turn 79. According to the "Guin-ness Book of

World Records" the oldest lifeguard is a 77-year-old man from North Car-olina.

But being a water aerobics instruc-tor and a lifeguard has kept Janssen feeling much younger. It's not about

"I just need to keep active. I don't want to just sit around."

want to just sit around."

Many in his classes still call him
"Father." But retired priest James
Jamsen doesn't don a collar anymore. He's more into swimming trunks and a beach towel. He works
this summer at the Davenport Outing
Club's new pool. The rest of the year,
he lifeguards and teaches a water course for those with arthritis at the Scott County Family Y in Davenport. "He's a scream to be around," says

DeEtta Montgomery of Davenport.
She and seven other ladies join
Janssen three days a week for classes
at the Outing Club. "Twe had both hips replaced, and this helps so much. I love it."

Another classmate, Sue Schwab of Bettendorf, says the women talk

LIFEGUARD



ed priest James Jamesen lifeguards at the Davenport Outing Club pool. He Please turn to Page B2 is absect 79 years old and also teaches water

RECORD HOLDER?

A recent story from North Carolina, which ran in the Quad-City Times July 11, stat a 77-year-old man there received his certificate from the World Records* sav ing he is the world's

oldest Bleguard. "He's just a kki," Davenport's James Janssen sald. "I can

best that record."

Janssen, who turns
79 in three months,
Itteguards at Davenport's Outing Club and the Scott County

To become eligible for the record, Janssen must ma his case to the people in London who authorize potential records. In fact, he can use this newspaper article to plead his case. An ration in the form of media coverage must be provided to verify arry claim, according to the official Guinness Record guide

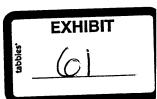
Of the 60,000 cate gories for all the records around the world, only about 4,000 ever make it in to the yearly book. But for now,

en is just enjoying the sunshine and his ability to do what he does at his age. "OK, ladies. Lat's

do the rocking horse on the rocking rocke in the water," he says as he finishes up the serobics part of his lessons at the Outing Club pool.

He won't se rocking chair.







Lifeguard: Swimming helps ease arthritis pain

Continued from Page B1 about recipes and other things while Janssen gets them moving in the water.

"My husband had him as a Scout leader," she adds. "He's really helping me. I can feel a difference in my clothes.

Janssen retired in 1991 as a priest in the Catholic Diocese of Davenport, where he had served since 1948. He served in more than a dozen parishes around the area. His health wasn't that great. He was having problems with arthritis in his knees.

He never dreamed at that time that his second career would be in lifeguarding.

But swimming has been a passion of his since he was an Eagle Scout at Camp Abe Lincoln and as a scout leader. Even during his priesthood in churches in and around the Quad-City area, he dabbled in lifeguarding including a stint in 1954 at the pool in Newton, Iowa. He keeps the billfold-sized card certifying him in lifesav-.

ing techniques from that year. During the Senior Olympics in the 1980s, Janssen took first

place in all the swimming

events.

"I was up and down the pool before the others even were down one lane. I decided to drop out in 1988 and let other people have a chance."

But he just kind of fell into

the job of lifeguard.

"My knee was bothering me with arthritis. By taking a water class at the Y, I felt better. I didn't have to have surgery."

He decided to get re-certified, and then was asked if he wanted to teach a class.

"I like people. And this is something I really like to do. Plus, people don't think that I'm that old."

Kari Basler, interim aquatic director at the Y, enjoys working with Janssen.

"He gets along with everybody. He is incredibly caring. He may forget your name, but he always recognizes people."