



SPM NEWSLETTER

St. Petersburg Masters | North Shore Aquatic Complex

St. Pete and SPM Strong!

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While this third quarterly issue of the newsletter technically covers our activities from July through September, the end of September seemed to roll right into October, and now Thanksgiving is upon us. Thank you to everyone who contributed, for your timely inputs even in the midst of digging out of two horrendous storms. Many of you shared your articles before Helene, some between Helene and Milton, and a few immediately after the storms. I apologize for the delay in getting it out. The tardiness is on this editor.

As you know, many of our teammates were impacted, many still displaced, first by Helene and then Milton. We all have friends and family who have been severely affected. I saw the personal posts that were shared, the offers to help, and caring responses that followed. It was uplifting. Then I saw discussions about when we'd be able to go back to North Shore Pool. Our team, the workouts, and the pool each provided an oasis of comfort, even during a time of crisis. Maybe everyone needed some semblance of normalcy.

So here is the newsletter, as late as it is, still celebrating our teammates' accomplishments and milestones, happiness, and communities even through the most difficult of times. In this issue, Suzanne Dearworth and Andrew Leone share their exciting Manhattan and Boston firsts. Midwest-nice is the theme for Sarah Swoch's Swim to the Moon. Alison Hayden, our new nationals 'beat' reporter, covers both pool and open water races. The Olympics and Bobby Finke's homecoming are thoughtfully recounted in Charlotte's article. Always searching out new venues, Mike Smith writes about his experience in the Pan-Am Games in Cleveland. We are treated to a wonderful perspective from newbie swimmer Howard Cheung. President Kathy Selles chronicles our past and future events and beautifully reiterates the meaning of team. As always, we get lots of valuable advice and tips from Coach Gary, as well as an insightful childhood story. And finally, we welcome the littlest new member to SPM! I hope you enjoy everyone's articles.

Again, many thanks to the contributors: Gary Bastie, Brooke Bowman, Howard Cheung, Suzanne Dearworth, Alison Hayden, Andrew Leone, Chelsea Nauta, Charlotte Petersen, Kathy Selles, Gloria Smith, Mike Smith, Sarah Swoch, and Sara Wolski. Please send your activities, photos, kudos for a teammate, and anything you want to share, to me at livia.zien@gmail.com. The next issue will cover events from October through December.

Keep on swimming, everyone!

Upcoming Pool Events

Dec. 6-8 / SCM: South Carolina SCM State Meet. North Charleston SC. [Information & online entry](#). Entry deadline: online entry closes Monday, December 2

Dec. 7 / SCM: Crawfish Invitational. Baton Rouge LA. [Information & paper entry](#). Entry deadline: received by Friday, November 29. Late entries accepted with extra fee only if empty lanes available in existing heats.

Dec. 7-8 / SCY: Florida Senior Games. Temple Terrace FL. [Information & registration](#). Entry deadline: received by Monday, November 11. Senior games for 50+. USMS-recognized

Dec. 14 / SCY: St. Nick's Invitational. Atlanta GA. [Information & online entry](#) | [paper entry](#). Entry deadline: paper entries received by Friday, November 29; online entry closes Sunday, December 8. Late & deck entries accepted with additional fee only if empty lanes available in existing heats.

Jan. 11 / LCM: Goodlife Games. Clearwater FL. Senior meet for 50+. Will be USMS-recognized

Jan. 31-Feb. 2 / SCM: Rowdy Gaines Classic. Orlando FL. [Information & online entry](#). Entry deadline: online entry closes Sunday, January 26

Feb. 8 / SCY: Gulf Coast Games for Life. Sarasota FL. Senior meet for 50+. Will be USMS-recognized



President's Corner

by Kathy Selles

These past few months have reminded us how valuable our family and friends are, how we love the security of house and home, the simple pleasures of clean water, electricity, and a home cooked meal. Hurricane Helene blew into Florida Thursday night, September 26th, bringing widespread flooding and leaving a path of destruction that has not been witnessed here in 100 years. Thousands of Floridians and several of our teammates have lost homes, cars, everything. Helene then continued north, wreaking havoc in the Carolinas with even more rain.

If that wasn't bad enough, two weeks later, Wednesday, September 9th, here comes Hurricane Milton, making landfall south of St Petersburg at Siesta Key as a Cat 3 with winds of 120 mph. St Pete had barely begun the clean-up from Helene, and now had to endure more wind and drenching rain. People up and down the western coast of Florida are faced with devastating losses. Despite the fact that this wasn't a direct blow to our area, many citizens will be dealing with the effects of Helene and Milton for a long time.

Our previous president, Mike Zabel, wife Jane, and his family, will be cleaning up from 3 feet of water in their house. One of his first thoughts was to post on Facebook that they cannot host the holiday party this year. No problem, Mike, we love coming to your house and will look forward to another year! There are probably many others we haven't heard about yet.

Above all, we are thankful that our families and friends are safe. This will be a huge disruption in people's lives. Remember NSP is there for you whenever you can make it back. Please know that our thoughts are with you as you work through this process.

The July LCM meet was held July 6th and 7th, carefully sandwiched in between other events being held that weekend, but everything seemed to work out well thanks to Brooke Bowman's organizational skills. Chris Stickle organized the Jeans 50, where swimmers wore a pair of jeans to swim 50 meters. Several people participated for some hilarious antics. Thank you to the many people who volunteered to time at this meet; it was great to have enough timers that we could easily offer breaks. Two lucky volunteers won gift certificates to Southern Steer Butcher in St Pete.

The Paris Olympics provided a special thrill this year, with Bobby Finke winning a gold medal and setting a world record in the 1500 meter free with a time of 14:30.67. This kid is so fast that you want to look for the motors that must be attached to his feet! How can he take off after swimming 1400 meters all out, then increase his speed at the end to win the event and set a world record that has stood since 2012? Just watch, Bobby Finke will show you how it's done. Bobby also won a silver medal in the 800-meter freestyle. I watched more of the Olympics than ever this year, tuning in to see Bobby, Katie Ledecky, and Simone Biles in particular. Fred Lewis can be especially proud of the training and guidance he has provided; all the hard work and all those early workouts paid off. Bobby was very generous with his time on August 17, when he came and signed autographs for his fans and admirers at North Shore Pool, allowing others to "try on" his two Olympic medals. A great swimmer and a really nice guy. Congratulations Bobby and congratulations Fred.

- Important dates for your calendar: Holiday party potluck 6 - 9 pm, December 14th at Ananda Bergeron's home: 736 69th Ave S, St Petersburg. Be sure to sign up for the potluck [here](#)
- Judge Beach Classic, March 15 and 16, 2025.
- St Pete Master's LCM meet July 12 and 13, 2025

Coach's Corner

Pike Lake Swimming

I grew up in northern Minnesota, just north of Duluth. While it's called the land of 10,000 lakes, there are about 5000 more. were closer to 15,000 but who's counting... Best of all, we lived near Pike Lake, where I did most of my swimming. Since the lake was about ¼ mile away, and so was the school bus, I became a pretty good quarter miler in high school.

As for swimming, it was usually between the end of May and August. The water temp was usually in the 60-s and 70's but, since the lake was spring fed, if you dove down more than 6 ft. your fillings would hurt due to the coldness.

By summer's end, we all had to stop swimming. And, for two reasons. First, the algae and lake weed would start to bloom. Once the algae count got too high, it did a number on our sinuses. The second reason was temperature. Sometimes, by mid-August, the nighttime temperatures would drop so that the water would be down into the low 60's or so. So, we swam only in the summer months.

We also had no outdoor pools. Access to indoor pools was during the school year and there were no age group programs. So, either we swam in the lake or didn't get to swim until November 1. That's when high school swimming season started. That also meant we got in shape between Nov. 1-Feb 5, and out of shape the rest of the year.

Most of us did other sports to stay in shape. We rode our bikes at least 5-20 miles a day, hiked or ran trails in the woods, played baseball, softball, or pickup games in basketball or touch football. Those like me also worked heavy construction jobs and did landscaping. Then, just prior to my senior year in high school, my buddy and I came up with a plan. Our plan included getting in shape before our senior year of swimming. We figured that the kids living in the Twin Cities had age group programs and maybe we could come up with our own. So, here's what we did.

During our final summer before our senior year, my buddy and I would swim at the lake, same place, same time, each day. Since both of us worked, we'd swim after work. And, that's what we did all summer long. We'd swim for hundreds of yards at a time or do certain strokes. We'd swim from one dock to another or from one home or property to that of another a few hundred yards away. By the end of our swims, we'd have gone a few thousand yards.

As for the lake, it was crystal clear and had a sandy bottom. You could see 20-30 ft. down on most days (unless it was really windy and wavy). And, the water quality was good. So, we had an easy time sighting and keeping track of one another. If we saw something interesting, we'd dive down to investigate, then pick up where we left off. But, with a safety-first mentality, each was there for the other, just in case something happened.

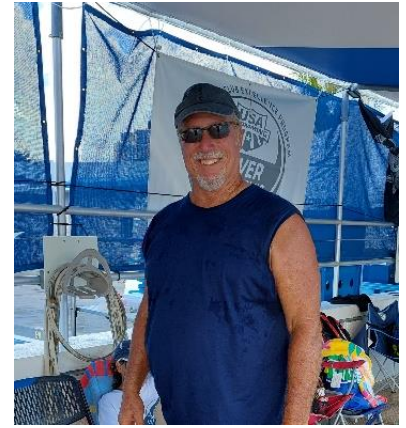
Now, we usually stopped swimming by summer's end. But this year, we kept going into September. Even when we went back to school, we'd first head over to the lake and swim until it got dark. Although the algae and weeds had bloomed and the lake was getting colder, we continued on into September. That was a first for both of us.

By mid-September the water's temperature had already dropped quite a bit. While we had no thermometer by which to gauge the actual temperature, it was cold to both of us. By now, the days were getting a lot shorter and there was less sun to warm the water but, we kept swimming each evening.

As the lake got colder and colder, we kept swimming. Finally, we passed October 1. That's when it got really challenging. Because the water was so cold (at least to us) we had to wade out, splash ourselves a big, then take the plunge. But, by now, our routine was firmly engrained in us and we had our hearts set on being in good shape for November 1.

By mid-October, we did our usual workout. One day, my buddy and I did our usual workout and ended up at our usual beach. Then we walked out of the water, or at least tried to. Problem was, we couldn't stand up. We'd walk a few steps, lose our balance, fall, get up, stagger, then fall down again. The reason? Hypothermia.

We were so cold that the blood had shunted away from our extremities in order to protect our hearts and brains (which we were certainly lacking). By the time we got to shore, all we could do is fall to the ground, find our towel, and wrap ourselves up in it and anything else we had. That's when it finally dawned on us. We'd done our final lake swim of the season. Neither of us would be capable of saving the other and it was pointless to swim another day.



By the time November 1st rolled around, not only were we still in pretty good shape, but the lake had also now frozen over! So, how cold was that water? Maybe in the 40's? Who knows. All I know is that we did our best to get in shape. In fact, we accomplished our goal. As for the lake being frozen over, it no longer mattered. But a lot of good came out of it.

Both my buddy and I went unbeaten in our events for most of the season. We both knew why. It was due to us doing our best to get and stay in shape. After that experience, neither of us complained about the water temperature ever again. So, our experience was certainly worth it.

What is Your Weakness?

While most shy away from our weaknesses and instead, try to only do what we're good at, there's a problem with that sort of logic. Our weaknesses, if left to themselves, will always raise their ugly head, just when we're trying to attain our next goal. The solution? Work on the weakness, while also working on our strength.

For instance, if we have a weakness for doing underwater kicks, especially in the sprints, what if our goal is to break 30 seconds in a 50 free, fly, or back? If all that's standing in our way is a few measly kicks, then why not work on those kicks? It's a simple solution to a problem that we're going to experience until we strengthen our underwater kicks.

Or, how about a particular stroke? If you watched the Olympics, as we say in the Women's 200 IM, Kate Douglass had by far the weakest backstroke. Now, I'm not accusing her of not having worked on the backstroke. What I am saying is that, I'll bet that she's now working on her backstroke, perhaps more than before. If her backstroke had been the same as the top women in her heat, she'd have won by at least 2 seconds. So, what if she improves her backstroke for her next race?

OK, so what can any of us do if we have a weakness? First, identify it. For example, take a usual workout or race. If we break it down to the 4 strokes, all the different kinds of turns, the start, our pace, how well we take out a race and/or finish it, we're probably going to identify at least one weakness.

With that said, the next thing to do is find creative ways to work on our weakness. A perfect example is underwater dolphin kicks. If they weren't so vital to most races, nobody'd use them. But, that's not the case, even in the distance races. If you saw Leon Marchand's 4:02 for a 500 free, his under-waters were insane for such a long race. But, if anyone else wants to copy his success, that's just one of the things needed to master.

So, what do you do when you turn? Do you blow out all your air right away? If so, you'll need to surface too quickly. Why not practice holding your breath, blowing out just a small amount to keep the water from coming up your nose, and blow your air out just before surfacing and taking that first breath? Just that short amount of time will help you stay under longer. And, who doesn't want to be faster at the end of a race?

Some of our swimmers only work out or do open water swims. If so, then head position, breathing so as not to put the body out of alignment, stroke count, sighting, etc. are for you. Work on whichever is your weakness. As for stroke count, it's rather difficult in open water but simple in a pool. In a pool, you can count your strokes per length. As a rule, I've noticed how most swimmers are between 12-23 strokes per length, depending on reach.

By working on stroke efficiency, it's possible to get our stroke count down a few strokes per length. What that means is fewer strokes/race. And, think about it, which strokes are the hardest? The ones starting out or those we use when finishing the race? It's the latter. So, why not eliminate some of them? Makes perfect sense.

OK, so what about the creativity part? Well, that's the fun part. If we make up some of our own drills, we can make them specific to our weakness. Take stroke count. In Bobby Finke's or Katie Ledecky's 1500, both had a great stroke count throughout the race. Even when they were tired (and believe me, they were both tired), they made it look easy. Why? They'd worked on stroke count, keeping things exactly the same each length. That's efficiency at its best.

If you have a weak stroke, why not view some of those great YouTube videos? They're free and you can find anything you want online. Quite often, visualization is the gateway to performing. And, rather than shy away from your weakness, maybe it's time to make a weakness into more of a strength. Try it and see. The worst that can happen is that you'll spice up your workouts.

Pool Competitions

2024 SPM Long Course Championship



SPMers (photo: L. Zien)

It was a beautiful weekend for our yearly Summer LCM meet, where 116 swimmers came to participate. Thanks to meet director Brooke Bowman for organizing another wonderful event. Everything ran smoothly, and with all the fast swimming, we finished early both days of the meet.

Among many exciting races, Bob Beach and Joan Campbell raced head-to-head



Joan and Bob – battle of the 94-year olds! (photo: C. Nauta)

in quite a few of the same heats. They are an inspiration to our sport! The 100m free event provided additional excitement with close races between Cam Chambers and Chris Stickle, and among fast SPM women. Chris mixed things up a bit by swimming butterfly for his 400m free event, and then followed it with a 200m fly (the equivalent of a sprint for him.)

This was also Olivia Andrews (25-29) debut at her first Masters meet. Welcome Olivia!

The coveted high point towels went to Howard Cheung (25-29 Men), Chris Stickle with 61 points (30-34 Men – 1st) and Cameron Chambers with 59 points (30-34 Men – 2nd), Sarah Swoch (35-39 Women), Russell Hawkins (35-29 Men), Cheryl Kupan (60-64 Women), and Judge Beach (90-94 Men).



Jeans Races (photos: G. Smith)



At the conclusion of Sunday's events, several swimmers from various teams participated in Sunday's "Jeans Event," organized by Chris Stickle. He explains that the idea was inspired by a viral Instagram post giving away a dream vacation to watch the US Olympic Swimming Time Trials in Indianapolis. Chris earned bragging rights, winning the 50m race swimming fly. But lots of others joined in the fun! Congrats to Beth Shaw (CAM Clearwater Aquatic Masters), Cecilia Bidwell (AVSC - Avalon Swim Club), Jeff Gould (SPM), Cameron Chambers (SPM), Dave LeClair (PBM - Palm Beach Masters), and Mandy Zipf (TTM - Tampa Tarpons Masters).

Thanks to our timers Phyllis Scheidt, Dawn Clark, Jonathan Porcelli, Lisa Flanagan, Christine Gould, Peter Betzer, Gordy Hawkins, Stephanie Gibson, Mija Lee, Robin Richins, Storm Eddy, Christine Gould, Noelle Ponce, Kelly Deuser, Paula Texel, Mitchel Hoffman, Tiffany Weidner, Linda Felton, and Livia Zien. Chelsea Nauta and Rob Tullman tag teamed as Saturday's head timers, and Lisa Flanagan served as Sunday's. Patty Nardoizzi was our wonderful Sunday announcer.



Howard and Sarah (photo: L. Zien)



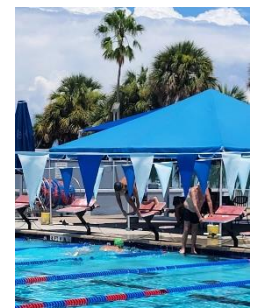
Howard, Hayley, Kelly, Cameron (photo: H. Cheung)



Judge, Bill, and Gary (photo: B. Stevens)



High pointers, Cheryl and Sarah (photo: S. Swoch)



Men's 200 free relay Cameron to Howard (photo: H. Cheung)

Names of volunteers were entered into a drawing for two \$25.00 gift certificates to Southern Steer Butcher in St Pete. Phyllis Scheidt was the lucky winner for Saturday's drawing, and Mitchel Hoffman for Sunday's.



Sarah Swoch (photo: C. Nauta)



The Judge (photo: L. Zien)



Howard, 50 fly (photo: H. Cheung)



Pat, Sherri, Joan (photo: C. Nauta)



Russell (photo: G. Smith)



Cameron, Sarah & Kelly
(photo: L. Zien)



Jo Jo (photo: L. Zien)



Head timers Chelsea and Rob (photos: Nauta & Zien)

Official officials – thank you, Kevin, Steve, Charlotte, and Mike! (photo: L. Zien)

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Our officials Kevin Mooren, Steve Freeman, Mike Zabel, and Charlotte Peterson kept us legal. Thank you! Congratulations to all. Results can be found [here](#).

More Cowbell at the Pan-American Masters Games in Cleveland!

by Mike Smith

Looking for another venue to compete? Consider the IMGA competition series with five-year age groups beginning at age 30!

The International Masters Games Association (IMGA) held its latest event in Cleveland, OH, July 12-21. The IMGA was founded in 1985 to support the Olympic movement and is the representative body of Masters sport worldwide, World Masters Games, Open World Series, and Pan-American Masters Games. The IMGA is also recognized by the International Olympic committee. Cleveland was the first American location to host the Pan-American Masters.

By the numbers, 4,000 competitors representing 70

countries and 48 states, competed in 24 sports. Swimming was held at the Busbey Natatorium at Cleveland State University. Busbey was one of the first of two 50-meter indoor pools in the state. Busbey boasts large gutters with a reputation of fast results and has hosted a number of championship events including the NCAA's. I competed in one of the first events held there which was also my last high school swim meet, winning silver.

Holding true to a fast pool, I posted my best long course (50 meter) butterfly in over four years with 31.82 seconds for a win coupled with a solid 38.17 breast, both are currently TOP 10 LC swims. Our international men's medley relay comprised of Columbia, Mexico, GA, and FL posted the fastest time of all age

groups. I ended the meet with four gold and one bronze.

Although I did have competitors from India, Great Britain, Poland, and a few USMS Top 10, from a swimming perspective there were a couple items working against the games; one was the timing of the event, sandwiched in-between the Spring Nationals in late June and the Summer Nationals in August as well as a late notice during registration that timed finals would be considered for USMS Top 10.

We had a great time

exploring Cleveland, took in the downtown sculptures, Browns stadium, made new friends, took in the Rock & Roll HOF, the sold-out Cleveland Indians against the Padres, dipped our toes in warm Lake Erie at Huntington Beach, shopped at west end market, and enjoyed a Walleye sandwich. Cleveland was a great time in the summer (wink-wink, nudge-nudge)!

Upcoming IMGA Events (according to their site, did not see 2028)

- 2025 World Masters Games – Taipei
- 2026 Open Masters Series – Abu Dhabi, UAE
- 2027 World Masters Games – Kansai, Japan
- 2027 Open Masters Series – Como Lake, Italy
- 2029 World Masters Games – Perth, Western Australia



(photo: M. Smith)



USMS Summer Nationals

by Alison Hayden

Three members of the St. Petersburg Masters swim team, Bob Beach, Christopher Stickle, and I made the long trip across country to experience sunny Mission Viejo, California at the Master's Swimming Summer Nationals held at Marguerite Aquatics Complex. The event took place August 21-August 25. I usually don't do long trips for swim meets, however a change of scenery from the northeast was indeed needed. I traded pine trees and cool ocean breezes for palm trees, sun, beach and swimming outside in a fast pool. I actually wanted to visit this area as exactly 30 years ago almost to the day I debuted in my first national triathlon championship down the street from the aquatic complex at Lake Mission Viejo. Very hard to believe that was so long ago. I was fresh out of college, never been to the west coast and, oh I was so scared! My uncle at the time coaxed me into visiting him and trying the event out. If it wasn't for him hosting me and giving me courage, I would have never discovered my talent for triathlon. Chris and I had a very delightful meal at a Mexican restaurant on the lake. Seeing that lake brought back so many memories as what that one single competition led to... 16 years of professional racing. Here I am 30 years later coming full circle to compete in my favorite sport; swimming as an older adult. Pretty neat stuff.



Chris, Alison, Bob (photo: C. Stickle)



The Masters Nationals event was well attended with 222 teams consisting of 1,281 swimmers (554 women/727 men). Just to mention a few fun facts, with 3 swimmers St. Pete placed 32nd place with 160 points. The 2 men placed 27th with 113 points and the lone female place 54th amongst all teams with 47 points. Impressive considering there were so many teams. Most attendees were West Coast based.

The venue was fantastic!! Prior to entering the pool there was an expo set up with all one's shopping needs, swimmer registration right at pool entrance, warm up pool in the rear of complex near diving well as well as another warm down pool behind the opposite end of the

50-meter pool. Plenty of seating all around, shaded bleachers, tents in the back near the diving well, more tents in the back warm down pool and plenty of lounge chairs in the grassy area near the expo. The best part was the water coolers with water and electrolyte mix all around the pool making it quite easy to stay hydrated.

Wednesday was distance day featuring the 1500 freestyle, Bob and Chris finished a very respectable 1st and 3rd place. Thursday was an off day for all of us. I have never had an off day at these events before, so I was more than excited! To the beach for Chris and I, Bob and his companion were headed to LA for the day. The



beach was just as I remembered it, beautiful! To get to the beach there were various entrances with stairs leading down a rocky cliff. There was hardly a person in sight, and the water was so blue, warm and crystal clear. Definitely a beautiful sunny relaxing day with a quick dip in the pacific frolicking in the waves.

Friday started out with the 200 backstroke, Bob again seeking first place, Chris 3rd place and I actually tried this event for the first time in LCM to mix it up finishing in 6th place. Later that day both Chris Stickle and I took 2nd in our 400 IM events.



Saturday was a light day for us, Bob Beach yet again won the 50 free, Chris took 6th place in the 200 free and Alison swam to a silver in the 800 free. The 800 and 200 free were at the end of the day so again a quick trip to the beach and a nice hike at a nature park. Again, very light crowds considering it was a weekend.

On to Sunday, the most brutal day of all, three events for Bob and myself and two for Chris. Once again, I got out of my comfort zone and tried a new event, 100 freestyle. I was pleased with a 3rd place finish and decided it would be a good event to work on for the future. Bob won 3 more gold medals in the 100 free, 100 back and 400 free. That makes a perfect 6 golds for the meet which I'm pretty sure only one or two other swimmers achieved. How he did 3 events in one day is beyond me. I enjoyed sitting in the bleachers with Bob before the 400 free listening to stories of his younger days living in Malibu, California. The man really inspires me to keep swimming and living. Shortly after the 100 free, I lugged my way through a very ugly 200 butterfly finishing in 2nd. Christopher Sickle had an amazing 200 butterfly finishing in 2nd place just edging his PR. I enjoyed screaming for him at the end of the lane. I redeemed myself in the 400 free with another silver and decent time. Chris finished a respectable third place.

A fantastic trip!! The best part was meeting swimmers from the West Coast, of which I only knew by name -- so neat to put a name to a face. When the next West Coast meet comes up and I have ample time, I will definitely make the trip. Perhaps more members will follow.

Full results can be found [here](#).

Maryland Senior Olympics

by Livia Zien

It was a family thing. When I turned 50, my mom asked if I would be interested in participating in the Maryland Senior Olympics since I was officially a 'senior.' She was never a competitive swimmer, but she certainly no stranger to swim meets, scoring our age group meets the old-fashioned way with pencil and paper. So, we did it. My mom was 80, and I was 50 and we both competed in breaststroke events. Eight years later, we are still competing (barring a few meets lost to the pandemic), and this time, we were joined by my brother Conroy, and our Energizer Bunny friend, Jo Ann Harrelson. We were cheered on by my dad, Glenda, my sister-in-law, and of course, Greg.



My brother, the same great athlete he was when we were kids, clocked a great 50 breaststroke time, not having competed for over 40 years, and only swam once or twice prior to the meet. Even though he has focused his efforts on marathon running since our summer league days, I hope he will consider joining us again next year.

I love MSO's slogan, "To Participate is to Win." It wasn't about my times (ok, maybe a little). But this meet really was about getting back into the water, enjoying the sport, and having fun. Thanks to Mike Smith for encouraging me to start back with a senior meet, like the senior events in our area. That day, I really did feel like I won!

Meet Round-up

Chris Stickle was spotted in Dallas at the South Central Zone Summer Championships on July 26. 1st place in the 800m free and 3rd in the 50m. He added a 4th place finish in the 100 fly. Was this in pursuit of the Leather Lung? Nice swimming, Chris!

The 2nd Annual Summer SWAGFest was held at the Dwight H. Hunter "Northeast" Pool in Gainesville. Th Haley Brahm had great swims placing 2nd in 50m free and back and the 200m IM, and 3rd in 50m breaststroke and butterfly.

Nine swimmers from SPM swam in the Dog Days LCM Masters Swim Meet on September 7 at the Long Center. Of note, this marked Devin Valdes' first USMS meet and Joshua McQueen's first as an SPMer, both in the 18-24 age group. Congratulations to you both on this first as well. Joshua placed 1st in the 50m free, and Devin 1st in the 50m fly, and 3rd in the 100m free. What a great start! Rounding out the men's team was Howard Cheung, Cam Chambers, and Chris Stickle. Howard racked up a several first place finishes in the 50, 100, and 200 free, 50m fly, and the 200m IM. Cam and Chris filled the 30-34 age group with first place finishes in 200 and 400 free (Cam), and 100 back and breast (Chris), and dueled it out finishing 1st and 2nd in the 200 IM. For the women, Hayley Brahm had great races in the 50 free, back, and breast and 200 IM. Karen Westerman won her 100 back, free, and fly events. Cheryl Kupan won the 100 and 200 back, and 200 IM. In the 70-74 Women's age group, there were some great match ups between Geraldine Jacobson and Nancy Kiernan in the 50, 100, and 200 free events, with Nancy winning her 50 back and 400 free, and Geraldine her 50 breast and 100 free events. Congratulations to all! Results can be found [here](#).

Cheryl Kupan and Jim Esposito swam in the 2024 Rob Curry Pancake Pentathlon hosted by Swim Out and Lake Gators Swim Club. Events were divided into sprint, middle distance, and endurance classes, with freestyle, backstroke, breaststroke, butterfly, and IM making up the 'pentathlon' component, and pancakes were served throughout the meet. Cheryl placed first in all her 60-64 endurance distance events, and sprinter Jim, placed 2nd in his 60-64 sprint class events. More information can be found [here](#).

Going Virtual ePostals!

5k/10k Virtual Championship

There were three scheduled team days this summer for the 5k/10k Virtual Championship. Thirteen swimmers (5 women and 8 men) participated in the 5k event. With 9 Top Ten finishes, and 3 All-Americans, SPM placed 2nd overall behind Oregon Masters who had 19 swimmers. All-American 5k participants included Barry Owen (55-59) 1:07:15.00, Cameron Chambers (30-34) 1:03:38.41, and Karen Westerman (55-59) 1:17:04.25. Top Ten winners were Abbie Leazes, Sarah Swoch, Suzanne Dearworth, Dawn Clark, Chris Stickle, Russell Hawkins, Andrew Leone, Jeff Gould, and Steve Freeman. Additionally, there were three All-American 5k Relays:

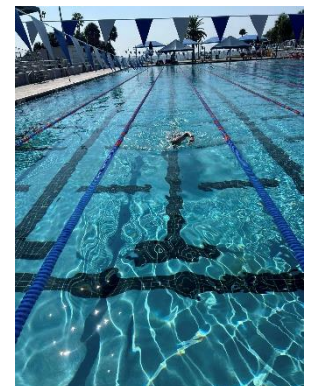
- Men's 25+: Cameron Chambers, Chris Stickle, Noah Manera 3:18:15.81
- Men's 35+: Andrew Leone, Steve Freeman, Jeff Gould 4:22:28.55
- Mixed 55+: Karen Westerman, Barry Owen, Jeff Gould, Dawn Clark 5:19:46.24

Seven swimmers took it further and competed in the 10k championship. Noah Manera won the All-American spot for the 25-29 age group with a time of 2:32:28.99. Sarah Swoch, Suzanne Dearworth, Cameron Chambers, Chris Stickle, Russell Hawkins, and Jeff Gould all earned Top Ten status. The Men's 25+ 10k relay (Cameron Chambers, Chris Stickle, Noah Manera) broke a national record with a time of 7:00:39.77. The Mixed 25+ relay (Chris Stickle, Cameron Chambers, Suzanne Dearworth, Sarah Swoch) earned an All-American title with a time of 9:58:52.84.

The 10k contingent placed 3rd overall, with the men placing 1st. A shoutout to Russ Westerman, officially an SPM member now for completing his first 5k, swimming next to his wife Karen. Congratulations to all 5k/10k swimmers on a stellar performance!

Full results can be found at

<https://www.usms.org/events/national-championships/virtual-championships/2023-virtual-championships>



Open Water Swimming

USMS Open Water Nationals

Congratulations to Stephanie Gibson on competing in the USMS Open Water Swimming Nationals in Stillwater, MN. Stephanie competed on both days, finishing 4th in her age group in the 1 mile sprint distance and 7th overall on July 20 with a time of 24:17. The next day, she competed in the 5k race, finishing 2nd in her age group. Way to go, Stephanie!



20 Bridges Manhattan Island Marathon Swim

by Suzanne Dearworth

Saturday July 27th, I arrived at North Cove Marina in New York City with my crew beside me. Linda Bostic (coach of Palm Beach Masters who had crewed this swim before), and 3 veterans of this swim -- Tracy Knight ('21), Paul Valitutto ('23) and NYOW observer Louise Twining-Ward ('22). We all boarded the tiny RIB (Rigid Inflatable Boat) and motored to the start point at the Battery at Lower Manhattan, for what would be the longest swim of my life, a 28.5 mile circumnavigation of Manhattan Island.

When we arrived at the starting point, I just tried to relax. I secured my goggles one last time. With my kayaker in place, it was time for me to jump. "Go Suzanne. Have fun," I heard Linda scream as I plunged into the Hudson and made my way



(photo: S. Dearworth)



around the famous Battery and the Staten Island Ferries and into the East River. My dream had begun to work itself towards reality as I began taking stroke after stroke through the waves.



The East River was pretty rough for 1.5-2 hours. The 3'-4' waves were strong and washing over me. There were large boats and high-speed ferries close by in the East River. Thanks to Captain John who drove the RIB, plotted the course and was in constant communication with boat traffic. He kept us safe. I just kept my head down and followed my kayaker's directions.



After a couple hours in the East River the waves finally simmered down. I remember swimming along a wall and a cameraman taking pictures as well as people relaxing under the trees and walking along the river path.

When I hit the Harlem River, I was having flashbacks to Davis Island in Tampa. I had done that swim at least four times in the past. The water quality and view was eerily similar to Davis Island. I swam along a

route with rows and rows of tires for what seemed to be a couple of hours. It amused me. I would call this "Tire Row."

Every 30 minutes I stopped to drink my pouch of Infinit Fruit Punch and take a SIS energy gel. As we entered the Harlem River, crew member Tracy Knight jumped in, to companion swim with me for 10 minutes or so. Then, not too much later Linda also jumped in for a short swim with me.



I made it to the Hudson River in 4 hours and 59 minutes. I heard Linda shout, "You are now in the Hudson at 4:59. You are having an incredible swim!" I pumped my fist a couple times and continued. Linda said later, "You just swam. You didn't stop and chat or anything." I guess one just gets into a zone during such a long swim. Throughout the swim I used hand gestures to my crew, but I said little.

I later learned the crew and others thought I may make it to the finish before sunset. A sub-8-hour swim was my goal.

It was in the Hudson near one of the bridges that my crew stopped me for a feed. Linda and Tracy started singing, "It's time to pee. It's time to pee." Apparently, I was on hour six or so and had not peed since that second

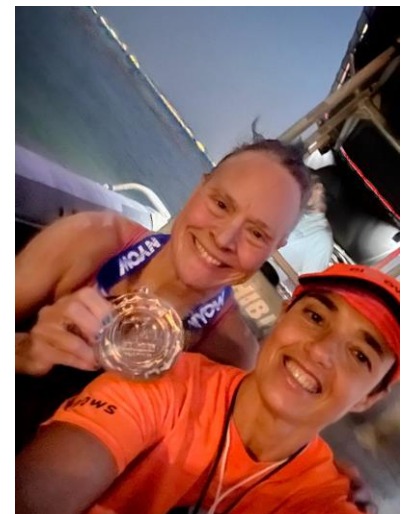
hour. I learned later my stroke count had dropped drastically, and Paul did not think I had been peeing. They were slightly concerned. I had been ingesting 8-10 ounces of Infinit fluid and a 2-3 ounce SIS gel every half hour. Yet I had not peed for over 4 hours. I stopped to take the feed. I tried to pee. I could not. It seems I carried all that fluid and gel with me for almost six and a half hours—quite a bit of weight to carry around during those remaining hours. This is something to address for future marathon swims. I suppose I did not think much of their song to me as they had been cheering me on the whole way from the crew boat.

As I swam under each of the 20 bridges, I was not sure of exactly which bridges they were. Except for the last bridge, the enormous George Washington. It is like an illusion; it looks like it's right there in front of you. You see it and think, "Wow, that's so close." However, it takes a long time to swim to that 20th bridge. Many swimmers have felt the discouragement of that bridge looming so long in the distance, only creeping to it slowly. Unlike the first half of this swim where there is a variety of iconic things to see such as the Statue of Liberty, the Empire State Building, and the Brooklyn Bridge, the second half of the swim is in the wide open Hudson with the same scenery throughout—mostly trees with very few landmarks to look at; time moves at a painfully slow pace in this concluding river of the swim.

I finally passed that last bridge, the George Washington. I started seeing familiar buildings, including the enormous Freedom Tower. At the 7 hours and 30 minutes mark, the crew exclaimed, "Last feed, You've got this."

It became dark. I was wondering when the Captain was going to have me put the lights on my head. I had another pair of goggles with the lights attached for when it got dark. Despite night setting in, he never did have me do that.

I began swimming along a wall with many people crouched over it. My teammates held up a towel and started running along the wall. I was going between 10 and 15 minute miles at the time, I later learned. My former teammates running along the wall with the towel and cheering for me



could not keep up with my swimming, even while they were running on land. The Hudson has a powerful current!

I knew I was close to the finish. I yelled out, "Where is the finish?" I knew it was nearby; however, it was dark, and an entire work shift of 8 hours had already passed while I had been swimming. I just kept swimming along that wall in the dark, following directions, not focusing much on landmarks or details.

Louise, the observer, rang a bell, signifying there were about 5 minutes left in the swim. Then, not too much longer after that I heard the whistle. I was done. I had just finished swimming the 28.5 miles around Manhattan Island in New York, a dream that was born six years prior. I smiled. I put my thumbs up in the air, then immediately peed for several minutes before climbing into the boat.

Upon my arrival into the boat, Louise presented me my New York Open Water official finisher medal. I put it around my neck, knowing the investments I put forth to earn it. The watch dangled around Louise's neck. "What was my time," I asked her. "Eight hours and twenty-five minutes, unofficially," she stated as I peered at the watch. I was somewhat disappointed in that. But just for a moment. I didn't eclipse the



eight-hour mark, but I did fulfill a huge dream. I thought of my mom. She always told me to "Look at the big picture." Well, the big picture is I fought through many personal and physical challenges and succeeded in what I set out to do. I smiled. Again.

As we motored back to the marina, I could see my two teammates and brother and his girlfriend in the distance. I was greeted by a hug from my brother. I then gathered among crew and teammates as champagne was poured in celebration.

There were now four of us standing there who had completed this swim. I was the fourth, the newly added 'graduate' of the 20 Bridges Manhattan Island Marathon Swim.

While I may have swum this "solo," I did not do this swim alone. It took a crew to get me there. It took support to get me there. It took people who believed in me and extended to me the gift of their time, energy, resources, and care: Linda who cut an out of country family vacation short to be on my crew; Tracy who flew in from Indiana to share her wealth of ultra-marathon experience with me and crew me; Paulie who brought his oar and his special rope all the way from Tampa to kayak all those hours and miles; my former teammate Janet who cheered me on all the way back to the beginning of this process and took off her coaching days of work to be there in person for me in NY; former teammate Solange who also showed up to take as many pictures and videos as she could and cheer me on; my brother who flew in from Ohio with his girlfriend to support me--the little sister who just loves to swim. It also took the support of my official observer Louise Twining-Ward who manned the majority of the WhatsApp Chat, giving those connected a chance to watch some of my swim; Donna, who organized the Go Fund Me to help me finance this swim; those who contributed to my Go Fund Me to help me with the costs of this dream; as well as all the swimmers and teammates I have swum with along the way in training, in the pool and in the open water. I did not accomplish this alone. I fought for it with the support of an amazing swimming and friend community. And I am extremely grateful to every single person!

***It was nearly 10:30pm as Linda, Tracy, Paul, and I piled into the car with all our gear. Linda found a burger and pizza place online and placed our order for us over the phone. When she walked in to get the food, she said, "We just had someone swim around Manhattan." The clerk at the counter remarked, "Why would anyone do that?" I definitely find this notable, and the question made me chuckle a few moments. The answer is "joy"—a joy for swimming and "challenge"—to see what one is capable of. And the final answer is "Why not?"

Swim to the Moon: A Midwest Nice Experience

by Sarah Swoch

The Midwest, where everything is nice: the people, the food, the scenery, and even the weather (most of the time). All of this "niceness" is especially welcome after enduring 95 straight days of heat advisories in Florida. So, I figured Michigan would be the perfect place for a swim in water that wasn't over 90 degrees. Swim to the Moon fit the bill perfectly. The water, the weather, the event staff, the volunteers, the swimmers, and the scenery—everything about the experience was pure Midwest nice.



(photo: S. Swoch)

Swim to the Moon supports North Star Reach, a fully accessible camp for children with life-threatening illnesses. In its 15th year, the event turned into a festival, offering swim races ranging from a mile to 15K over two days. The water temperature sat comfortably in the upper 70s, with just a little wind to keep things interesting. The five lakes I swam through stayed perfectly flat, except for a bit of light rain that made it all the more peaceful.



This year's 15K race celebrated the event's 15th anniversary and was fittingly dubbed the "Supermoon." The 10K race, held the day before, was named the "Full Moon," as it involves two laps of Half-Moon Lake. Naturally, the 5K became the "Half-Moon."



We kicked off the race in the pre-dawn darkness, starting from North Star Reach with glow sticks in our goggle straps and pinned to our backs. Kayakers, ever the dependable Midwest crew, stationed flashlights behind the buoys so we could see them more clearly than we could in daylight. As I made my way through the Pinckney Recreation Area, I spotted wild turkeys crossing the road and a few deer on my drive to the lake—just another slice of Midwest life. The start of the race, still shrouded in darkness, felt a bit spooky until fellow swimmers reassured me, "No sharks here!" To which I laughed and said, "Sharks? I'm worried about gators!"

Entering the water with the 15K crew, I met swimmers who had tackled the 10K the day before, as well as some fellow Infinityman finishers. Marcia Cleveland was there too, though I've yet to meet her despite swimming in a few races together.

This race counted as a triple crossing, requiring three loops of the 5K course. It made for a unique dynamic, as each lap involved running out of the water to the transition area, where volunteers quickly handed me my special needs bag. I fished a Gu from the bottom of the bag and, as I tucked it into my swimsuit, one of the volunteers remarked, "So that's how the ladies do it." I shouted back, "It's my emotional support butt Gu!" before diving back into the water.

The second lap was brighter, and I could finally take in the sights. Around halfway, I discovered the "duck with headphones" buoy—an impromptu snack stop. There was also a pink flamingo buoy and a swan buoy to keep things fun. At one point, I even saw a real swan, and for a second, I wondered if I was imagining it. I also swam through some reeds where I spotted a "beware of alligator" sign. Yikes! I got out of there fast—though I'm still wondering if alligators could actually survive this far north.

Throughout the day, rain came and went, keeping the powerboats off the water and giving us welcome cloud cover. The sunfish were out, though. Kayakers, stationed between buoys, kept us on course and kindly redirected us when we drifted. Sighting after so many kilometers is exhausting, and I was grateful for the extra help.

Lake swimming in the Midwest isn't for the faint of heart. You swim every kilometer, no tides to sweep you along, just the occasional wind making one direction tougher than the other. But it's the Midwest, so naturally, I made about 15 new friends and was adopted by a team from Naperville, Illinois—just a stone's throw from where I grew up. As usual, there's only one degree of separation in the swimming world.

At the finish, I proudly wrapped myself in my Swim to the Moon towel and wore my bag tag medal. Then, I enjoyed a hearty breakfast of mac and cheese and pancakes, reminiscent of a good old church brunch, while cheering on my new friends as they crossed the finish line.

Swim to the Moon is one of the best-organized races I've ever participated in, and I'd recommend it to anyone looking to escape the Florida heat for a weekend. Detroit is an easy flight from Tampa, and accommodations range from hotels near the University of Michigan to campsites in Pinckney, or Airbnbs in Dexter. Plus, they've got some fast swimmers up there, so whether you're in it to race or just to enjoy the scenery, you won't be disappointed. I'd happily go back and do it again.

And in true Midwest fashion: Yep, it was all real nice!



Open Water Swimming in New England

by Alison Hayden

So most of you that know me know I like to escape the sauna-like weather of the summer of St. Petersburg and escape to my home in Newcastle, Maine. Just a wee little village on the midcoast of Maine where several generations of my family have resided. If you like water, this is definitely the place to be in the summer. Every day I have 4 choices to choose from for a swim. My backyard which sits on a tidal fjord 15 miles from the open ocean, various lakes within 2 miles of the home, the frigid ocean and the of course the pool.

This summer I finally got to swim in an open water race that in the past, I kept wishing I had done. On July 13, I traveled to Bristol, NH for a long weekend to compete in Swim With a Mission 10k open water race. I love crossing the Maine border into New Hampshire -- it's like majestic mountains appear out of nowhere. Swim With a Mission is put on by the Swam Organization, a non-profit group supporting veterans. This particular swim was a main event for the group's fundraising activities. I'm not exactly sure how much was raised, however my close friend got an award for the highest funds raised at \$21,000. The whole event was all about veterans, some wounded veterans even doing their very first ever open water swim. There was an incredible turnout, about 300 people. Included in the 10k swim was also a 5 and 1km distance. We swam in Newfound Lake, which in my opinion is one of the most beautiful lakes I've ever swum in. You can see from the pictures: beautiful mountains and crystal clear water. It was a somewhat of a warm day with the water temp at 76 degrees.



Not knowing if I had any competition, I was just stoked to swim in such a beautiful place and be in company of my awesome New England Masters friends. The race was

amazing and despite limited training, I swam well and felt even better. Most folks had kayakers. I got lucky and had the lead kayak most of the way. It was not until the end when I found out I had it was the lead kayak. The start was crazed with people swimming every which direction, I think I was in dead last for the first quarter



mile. I had a plan to swim the first 5k across the lake at a moderate pace and pick up the pace drastically on the way back. I sure accomplished that goal negative splitting by quite a few minutes.

I finished first overall in the 10k and enjoyed a spectacular home-cooked breakfast by the race staff. It really hit the spot after a long swim. The most interesting thing was the first-place winner had to do some pushups up at the podium. No problem. I obliged and my lovely friends got some video. After the race I spent some time exploring around the area with friends, discovering new places. The next day a group of friends and I competed in the Jenny Thompson LCM swim meet in Dover, NH. Yes, we are crazy, an open water swim and meet the next day. I just enjoyed myself and company. The pool swims really were a challenge with the previous day's 10k.

I also competed at another New England open water race in August, called the Glen Lake Swim. It was a 2-mile race consisting of 2 loops in a small dam fed lake. Despite the rainy weather and cool temps, it was another fun well run race. This race was just outside Manchester, NH which was a good excuse to go visit a friend in Manchester. I saw most of the same people I saw at Newfound Lake.

Next year I will try and make the open water season in the north a little longer.



Boston Lighthouse x 2

by Andrew Leone

On August 26, I completed a sanctioned solo 16 mile boat-supported Boston Lighthouse Double in Massachusetts (<https://www.massowsa.org/blsx2>). In 2022, I had completed the Boston Lighthouse Swim and was looking for another cold-water adventure (<https://www.massowsa.org/around-nahant>).

The Massachusetts Open Water Swimming Association (MOWSA) is planning to assemble a triple

crown of marathon open water swimming for its state. The swim will include the Swim Around Nahant (which I completed last summer), BLS x2, and Nantasket to Nahant (N2N).

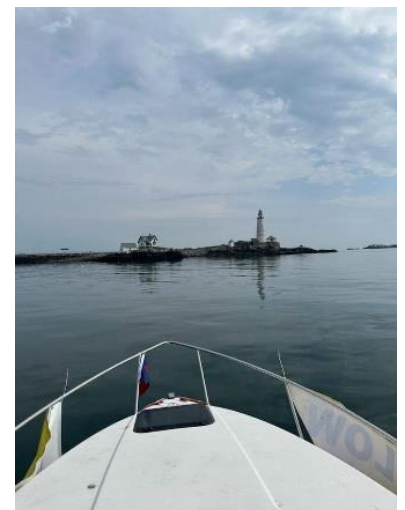
We were blessed with an amazing weather day. The winds were extremely calm, actually at the start the measurement of the official observer was 0.0 knots! The water temperature ranged from 62 to 64 degrees.

My support crew consisted of fellow SPMer Ian Tarrant and Paul Vallituto, a local swimmer from Tampa as well as a local boat captain who does an amazing job, Tim White. Also an amazing kayaker Bill Steele and MOWSA observer Jess Gerber.



I love cold water swimming, and the water was very clear and debris free. I did not encounter any marine life except for my companion swimmers Paul and Ian! There had been many recent whale sightings in the Boston Harbor but sadly not for us on this day.

The halfway point involves coming ashore at the Boston Lighthouse, the last occupied functional lighthouse in the United States as of 2023. In fact, the beach was very rocky, and it was actually



quite challenging to clear the water line and not cut my feet on the many rocks and shells. The swim is very scenic and features views of the many Boston Harbor islands and the city's skyline.

I completed the swim in 7:26:55:42. Every marathon swim is unique and has different challenges. I am incredibly thankful for the SPM swim family and my family and friends who support me, encourage me, and love me throughout my life and swim journey!

I highly recommend this swim to anyone interested. Let me know if you have questions. I hope to do the final swim of the Triple Crown next summer in Massachusetts!

Bobby's Homecoming

by Charlotte Petersen

"Old school, make 'em hurt and see who wants it". This was Fred's response to my congratulatory email after Bobby won the 1500 meter free in world record time. I had been glued to the Olympics most of the first week of competition except for a few days of work. Thank goodness for mobile devices and Peacock. Sunday 8-4-24 I was at



(photo: C. Petersen)

work but know the timing for the final swim of the men's "mile" so my lunch was at that time and the entire hospital know not to bother me. I could watch up close and on my phone. Bobby's swim was amazing and as I described from trials, he is such a nice young man; well-spoken and humble. To see and hear both his sisters during the swim, watch his parents and girlfriend (Ellie) was heartwarming and still give me goosebumps once again.

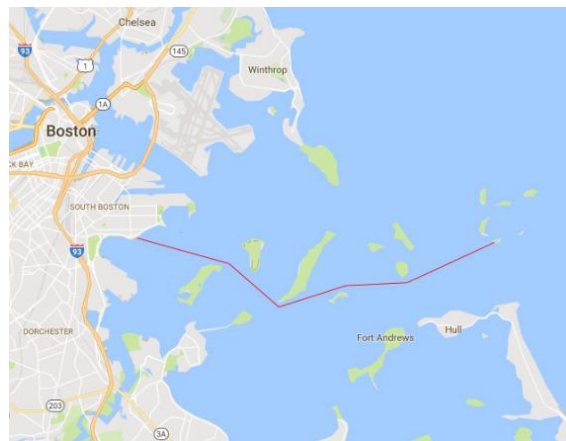
The following AM before practice, I once again congratulated Fred, and this time his response was, "I knew he would do it this way and he screwed up the last 3 times." (World championship 2023 where he got silver and bronze and the 800 during the Olympics). I guess getting silver and bronze was a complete failure- LOL.

These Olympics were not so far away and the time zones were favorable, at least for us 0530 AM swimmers. We were able to

watch some of the prelims live on mobile devices and we had to skip a 100 here and there when our NSAC alumni swam.

Nic Fink and Jack Alexy were up first. Nic swam his way to a silver- 2/100 from GOLD. What a story. Jack started his dream with GOLD in the 4x100 Free.

Way to represent and lead off. They said the 100m breast was so slow as none broke 59 sec. They also said the pool was slow. Well it was the same for everyone and I wonder if Bobby felt it was a slow pool? Nick got 2 more medals and GOLD in the mixed medley relay in new world record and silver in the men's medley relay. Each time he swam very well and what a pleasure to see him getting so much media attention after his events. Their (unborn) son at the time, will be proud.



(photo: L. Zien)



Regina, Kelly, Jim, and Bob – fans! (photo: L. Zien)



St. Pete Masters get to meet Bobby (photo: L. Zien)

Team USA was probably not as dominating as many thought they would be. I have said more than once that both the European and Asian swimmers can swim fast so it really didn't surprise me with the final medal standings. As an example, I had mentioned Matt Fallon's competition included an Aussie, some Europeans, and a Chinese swimmer. Matt unfortunately did not swim up to expectations and did not finish. I know he is back in the pool and with a tattoo of the rings, so he will be ready next time.

Bobby's 800 was great and an Olympic silver is pretty special. However, he was brutally honest during his interview and not happy. I guess Wiffen knew he was coming after him and the last 50m from both of them was pretty fast and exciting. Personally, I had been "concerned" for Wiffen's speed in Europe, so I was not 100% surprised to see him win the 800 but my heart is red, white or red, white, and blue. Not green, orange, and white.

Bobby made it around the news media as expected by the athletes and then he and Ellie flew to Nice. Their stay was cut short as he had more opportunities in Paris (sponsors, etc.) including the closing ceremony. Ellie did not come home with a ring on her finger – I checked.

I was working the day of ST PETE AQUATIC's Bobby Finke's home coming. Yes, I am tired of Clearwater taking credit for him. I asked Chelsea to ask him if he would stop by "my" hospital on his way home. Well, he did and I was so appreciative for his time. Lots of pictures with staff in various departments and handshakes with patients leaving. I got my pictures and shared stories about Bobby when he was a pain in the rear as a 6-year-old. He shared his plans for the future and getting back in the pool after going to US open in tennis, waving the green flag at Indy, and doing the rounds at the local clubs. What I appreciated the most is listening to both him and Katie Ledecky talking about their training in Gainesville and how much they appreciate each other. Bobby said, as long as Katie swims, I will swim. Both will be back in the pool soon after this is written.

Congratulations to the entire Finke family and thank you for sharing Bobby.



The Bobbys (photo: L. Zien)

Thoughts After a Year of Swimming

by Howard Cheung

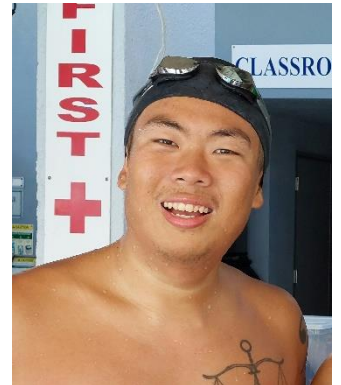
Before I became a swimmer, I was a weightlifter. I was able to deadlift several hundred pounds and that gave me a sense of hubris. I thought I could do anything. I dove into the pool thinking I would start swimming fast right away. I did not. When I saw people twice my age, even three times my age, swim laps around me at North Shore, I was humbled. I was also hooked.

When I was a weightlifter, I could eat terribly, sleep terribly, and still have a great lifting session. This is not so with swimming.

I'm learning now that swimmers are a neurotic group. We feel angry if we haven't swam for a week; we remark on how this pool is more shallow than that pool; we complain that the practice pool is a few degrees warmer than usual. At this point I wouldn't be surprised if a swimmer complained because Mercury was in a different part of the sky. These neuroses stem from the fact that swimming is a game of inputs. A confluence of different factors, from what we ate, how we slept, how tough and how recent was our last workout (did we "taper"), add up together and impact our swimming performance. I too have developed this neurosis after swimming for a year. But I prefer to think of it as being in tune with my own body. I've figured out how to tinker with these inputs to make me feel my best at each practice, and more importantly, at each swim meet.

When I was weightlifting, I could regularly expect to add 5 or 10 lbs to my maximum lifts. It was a linear progression. When I started swimming, I could regularly expect to shave a second or two off my best times. These performance gains have slowed, and I now get excited if I'm able to swim even half or a quarter of a second faster. I have learned first hand that swimming does not follow a linear progression, but rather an exponentially decaying progression. That's okay. I can find a different way to track my progress.

Over the past year, I measured my progress in swim meets. As Gary discussed in the previous newsletter, each swim meet is a chance to work towards another race, another event. My first swim meet was the Valentine's Day meet earlier this year, where the goal was to just survive. After getting some times up on the board (all personal bests, of course), I set my sights on our summer long course meet in July. I quickly learned



that long course was a different beast than short course yards. I couldn't just rely on strong underwaters but had to have good technique and endurance as well. With that in mind, I decided to work towards the 200-meter IM in the Dog Days meet in September. Training towards that goal forced me to swim all four strokes, yes, but also taught me to budget my energy in a race, how to execute technical transition turns, and that I could catch up to others in the breaststroke leg.

As of the time of writing this piece, I am working towards swimming 100-meter fly at the Rowdy Gaines Meet in October. While I'm excited to see what times I'm able to achieve in Orlando, I am more focused on the process than on the result.

There is a pleasure to this grind. There is a joy in working towards something not for anyone else but for yourself. I don't hold any delusions that I will go to the Olympics or that I will break a world record any time soon. But I do want to see what my body is capable of. I guess swimming is like lifting in that way. If you asked me a year ago to swim 50-yard fly, let alone 100-meter, I don't know if I could have physically done it. I'm excited to see where I go in my journey with St. Pete Masters.

Another Drill

by Gary Bastie

While we seem to have quite a few drill sets, few of us know enough to keep life interesting so, here are a few that might spice up your workouts.

Some obvious drills include one-arm free, fly, or back. Others include touch-pull or "catch-up" where you swim freestyle, touch your outstretched hand with the other, then alternate pulling one hand at a time. Your stroke touches, then pulls, then the opposite arm touches out front and pulls. The non-pulling arm stays out front, waiting for the stroke cycle to finish so it can pull.

One I like is "distance-per-stroke". It's where you see how few strokes you can do per length. It's a good warm up exercise because it uses a fuller range of motion than regular swimming. And, it helps increase efficiency.

Another lesser used drill is "black like". If you swim over the black line beneath you, try to keep your arms outside the line as you move through your stroke cycle. It's a great drill for those who like to cross over, pull too far under the body, and it helps stroke efficiency as well.

Have you ever tried double-arm backstroke? That's where you pull both arms simultaneously. It's great for working on the finish of each stroke. But, remember to drop the snorkel on your backstroke sets. It just plain don't work...

Or, how about breaststroke? There's breaststroke without fins, using a dolphin kick; breaststroke using fins, breaststroke, with a freestyle kick. Breaststroke without any kick, double pull breaststroke, and more.

Butterfly is another one. You can do one-arm fly but, how many have tried triple kick fly? Or, how about 1-arm for two pulls on left, 2 pulls on the right, then 2 pulls with both arms? I wouldn't recommend using hand paddles, however.

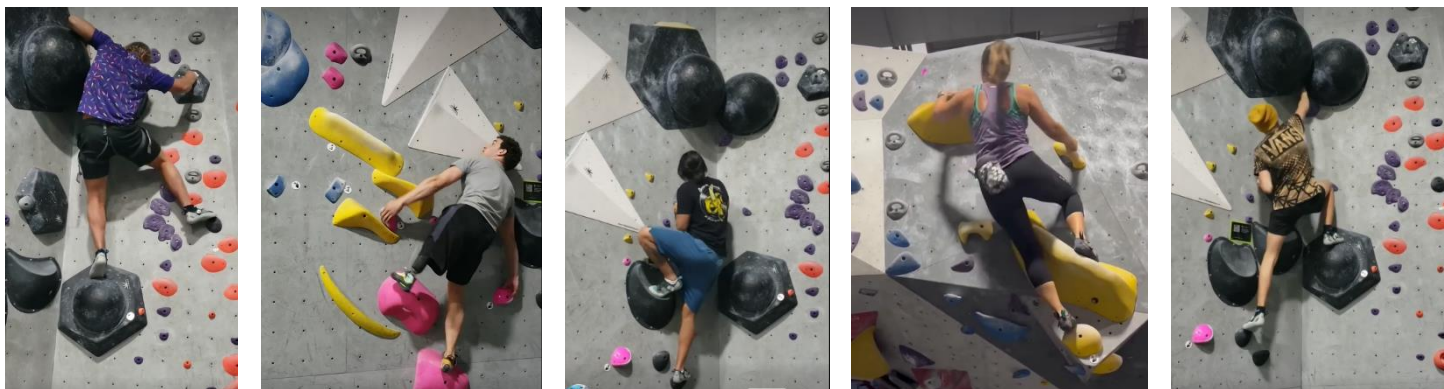
Freestyle can also use a finger drag, touching armpit with thumb on the way by, or other variations where the hand is pulled in closer to the body and the elbows are in a more "up" position. For triathletes, how about head out freestyle or eyes out only? Might as well get used to sighting. And, if you need to, incorporate sighting into each workout where you do so many regular strokes, then sight the end of the pool, and put your head back in the water.

If you're learning flip turns, why not swim freestyle into the wall, flip, and come out on your back? That helps you go in straight, come out straight, then twist onto your stomach. The old way is to try and twist on the wall but many have had knee problems for doing multiple turns and twisting on the wall. The goal of a turn is to be fast, both on and off the wall.

Another one is shoulder issues. If you do open turns, use the non-hurting shoulder to touch the wall. When we do hundreds of turns, shoulders notice so mix it up at the least or learn to open turn with both arms.

Well, that's about it for this newsletter. It's time for an adult beverage, some TV, and rest. I'll try to do more when I get home from work.

Socials!



Teammates Chris Stickle, David Gelfand, Howard Cheung, Sarah Swoch enjoyed time together outside of the pool at Vertical Ventures. They top roped, bouldered, laughed a lot! According to Sarah, "There were lots of well-placed discs, almost as many knocked out, and only a few ending up in the kitchen. We had a great time!"



A group also went out to cheer on the Rays on August 17 - Rays Swim Day is August 17. It was a successful outing as the Rays beat the Diamondbacks 6 - 1.



Mark December 14 on your calendars for the Holiday Party, hosted by Ananda Bergeron! There is an optional White Elephant Gift Exchange (\$20 limit). Sign up to bring a dish at [here](#). Please RSVP by December 1st.



Welcome Vivian Sara!

Sara Wolski and Bryan Dzenkowski welcomed baby Vivian Sara at 3:22am on August 9. Sara writes, "We are over the moon with happiness and gratitude." Congratulations to the happy family! We can't wait to meet her!

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