



SPM NEWSLETTER

St. Petersburg Masters | North Shore Aquatic Complex

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Buh-bye 2021!

Well ... What a quarter, what a year. It's hard to believe that another year has gone by, but we managed to rotate through all three courses, SCY, LCM, and SCM again, holding and attending meets with additional safety guidelines, and swimming like champions.

As I wondered about having enough content for this last issue of 2021, our teammates were busy generating news, competing in 6 meets, new open water races, ePostals, and forays into high school coaching! Read Coach Gary's article as he tips his hat to race participants. This issue is packed with great meet summaries from Paula Texel and John Nixon, insightful thoughts on goal setting for the new year from Regina Novak, and the always helpful tips from Gary Bastie. Celeste Patton recaps an exciting new OW swim series. Ananda Bergeron highlights the inspirational roles that some of our teammates are taking on as coaches. I've also had the pleasure of talking with Peter Betzer as he returned to competition after a harrowing medical procedure. And Judge Beach shares an article capturing some of the history of USMS as it started.

Thank you, Phil Harasz, for taking the helm and doing a wonderful job helping us stay on course. Phil is nearing the end of his term as our club president, reflects on the most unusual past two years. Stay tuned for information about the annual meeting.

Many thanks to all those who contribute articles, photos, and ideas. A special thanks to Gary Bastie, Ananda Bergeron, Celeste Patton, Mike Buchholtz, Phil Harasz, Megan Howson, Patty Nardozi, John Nixon, Aaron Peter, Regina Novak, Mike and Gloria Smith, Chris Stickle, Sarah Swoch, Paula Texel, and Craig Travers. And my sincerest thanks to those who have put up with my pestering for articles and photos in the past.

Alyssa Harmon has graciously offered to help with our newsletter (Thank you, Alyssa!) as I will be playing a smaller role in the near future. I have enjoyed reading and compiling all great the stories you have contributed over the years, and I look forward to reading more! If you would like to help out, please let Gary or me know.

Please send any ideas for articles to Alyssa or me (amharmon97@gmail.com or livia.zien@gmail.com). Thank you and happy swimming!

Upcoming Events

Jan. 16: Tampa Bay Frogman Swim (3.4-miles). Tampa FL. *Fundraiser for the Navy SEAL Foundation.* [Information](#). Swimmer entry closed -- maximum number of entrants reached.

Jan. 30 / SCY: SPM Team Hour Swim (two sessions: 8am and 9:15 am) email Gary Bastie myppcusa@live.com to reserve spot

Feb. 12-13 / SCY: Valentine Meet. Clearwater FL. [Information & online entry](#). Entry deadline: online entry closes Wednesday, February 9

Mar. 5 / LCM: Goodlife Games. Clearwater FL [Order of events & registration](#). *Entry deadline: received by Monday, February 28. Senior meet for ages 50+. USMS-recognized*

Mar. 19-20 / SCY: Bob Beach Championship Meet. St. Petersburg FL. [Information & online entry](#). *Entry deadline: online entry closes Sunday, March 13*

Apr. 3 / SCY: Sarasota SCY Meet. Sarasota FL

Apr. 7-10 / SCY: YMCA Masters Nationals. Orlando FL

Apr. 28-May 1 / SCY: USMS Spring Nationals. San Antonio TX

From Coach Gary: Swim Meet Lessons

By Gary Bastie

We've had a few swim meets as a team in recent months, and I felt the need to congratulate those who made treks to Sarasota, Orlando, our own pool, and to Nationals or Atlanta. The reason is, it wasn't convenient or easy. But your efforts didn't go unnoticed.

For instance, SPM won the Rowdy Gaines Meet in Orlando. We out-relay-ed everyone in the pool and had some super efforts by each of our swimmers. SPM looked like an organized, quality team that others took note of. In fact, several told me just that.

We've also had some new swimmers compete for the first time. They've done great! You could tell that they've worked on starts, turns, strokes, and were competitive, right out of the gate. We can only hope to see more of that as time goes by.

Then, there were our veteran swimmers, those who've competed many, many times before. They set the tone and an example for the others. Some swam relays when they'd just gotten out of the pool in the previous event. Some even swam back-to-back relays. But they all had one thing in common. They were true competitors who didn't give up and who made a real effort to compete at the highest possible level. Hat's off to each of you. It's been a pleasure being with you as often as I can.



Spice Up Your Workouts

By Gary Bastie

Workouts can sometimes be rather boring. Same yardage, same black line at the bottom of the pool, same...I think you get it. Well, since you asked, I'd like to offer some tips that can spice up any workout. Here goes.

Some of us have rather slow turnovers. As a result, sprinting and distance swimming are practically the same thing. But there are some things you can do to increase your turnover without having to sacrifice your distance per stroke.



Photo credit: Splendhtable.org

One is to use a pull buoy when you swim 25's and 50's. Without your arms having to wait on your legs, most people will turn over much faster with a pull buoy than they do just swimming. Try it and see.

Another tip is to learn the windmill turnover. It's where your arms are rather straight as they recover (instead of high bent elbows). This results in greater power, faster arms, and it can lead to such a different turnover that you become a sprinter, right before your very eyes. If you Google some of the best sprinters, you'll see what I mean.

Other tips include learning to sprint the first 12½ yards of any 25. This sets up the rest of the race, in this instance, either a 25 or 50.

Another one is to swim flip-flops. That's where you swim one stroke down and another one back. Say, 25 fly, 25 back for a 50. By doing that, your strokes won't "fall apart" due to overuse of certain muscles and, your workouts will suddenly become far more interesting and less boring.

If all you swim is freestyle, learn the backstroke too. Since it uses antagonistic (opposite) muscle groups, it can be used for recovery purposes or to impress your non-swimming friends.

Other tips include doing just one thing at a time. For instance, if you're swimming 50's or 25's, maybe just work the push-offs, streamlining, or breakouts (your first stroke after surfacing). But, keep it simple and only work one thing at a time. Once you master it, then go onto something else. In my case, I like to work on stuff until I've mastered it to my own satisfaction. Sometimes, I work at small stuff till I get it right. That way I can sleep at night, have that extra beer, helping of dessert, or buy my dog something I need.



President's Corner: So long, and Thanks for All the Fish

By Phil Harasz

Anyone who's read *The Hitchhiker's guide to the Galaxy* is familiar with that phrase. According to the book, porpoises are far more intelligent than humans, and therefore they were aware that an alien ship was about to vaporize Earth to make way for a hyperspace bypass. So, the porpoises all just mysteriously left Earth one day (the book doesn't explain how), but they left behind a note for us humans which simply said, "So long, and thanks for all the fish".

This phrase came to mind because I have reached the end of my two-year term as your club president. Your board is currently planning our annual meeting, whereupon you, our club members, will be asked to elect a new board. Many

board members will be returning, and we will nominate a current board member to serve as our next president. It's important that we elect officers to the board which have prior experience serving as a board member, to provide continuity of knowledge and experience. If you are interested in serving on the board, contact any of our board members and please let them know. *(Current board members are listed at the end of this newsletter.)*

I was elected to be your club president in February of 2020. The following month, the pandemic was declared, laying waste to all our plans for the entire term of my presidency. March of 2020 was to be our 50th annual Bob Beach Championship meet. We had T-shirts made and celebrations planned. By April of 2020, the pool was closed. The beaches were closed. The gyms were closed. I ended up swimming in Tampa Bay right behind the NSAC. I remember one day seeing another swimmer approaching in the Bay. We both popped our heads up and lo and behold, there was Coach Gary Bastie, who was obviously as desperate to swim as I was. We smiled and said hello, then put our heads down and continued swimming.

In addition to finding ways to swim, we also had to find ways to continue as a swim club. We established "Zoom" meetings for our board meetings. As it turned out, online meetings made it so much easier to meet, we've continued those online meetings to this day. I'm guessing they will continue long after the pandemic is over (if it ever will be). From there, we cancelled the Long Course Meters meet we usually have in the Summer. Fortunately, our club had money saved in a "rainy day fund", so we were able to continue operating without revenue for an entire year. The two swim meets we host each year is our main source of revenue. That, and the annual club dues we ask all you to pay once each year.

In addition to losing revenue, we also lost members. In our February 2021 meeting minutes, there is a note: in 2020 we had 236 members, but now were down to 167. We held our annual meeting via Zoom that month, but I believe we'd hit our low point by then. In 2021 we began our slow crawl back to normalcy. We hosted swim meets! We had income! But still no annual banquet, which didn't matter because there were no meets in 2020. As for this year, with the latest Covid-19 "Omicron surge", I'm not sure when we will have our next swim banquet.

For 2022, your board is busy planning our Bob Beach Championship meet, currently scheduled for March 19th and 20th. Our usual Meet Director, Tora Williams, has let us know this will be her last meet as our Meet Director. Thus, the new board will have as their first task finding us a new Meet Director. In the meantime, the Bob Beach Championship will be epic fun. Sign up and come on out! And if you're not the competitive type, no problem, volunteer to be a timer!

As for Covid-19, everything I've read about this latest "Omicron surge" says that while it spreads much faster than the prior strains, it is less deadly. Although, it is still deadly, (And how many deaths are acceptable? I think we all agree that is zero), experts have said they expect this current surge to peak by the end of January and be on its way out by February. Another quote that comes to mind from "The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy" as it relates to the surge: on the cover of the guide, written in large friendly letters, it says "Don't Panic."

So, let's follow *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy's* advice: Don't panic, and plan on coming out for the Bob Beach Championship Meet on March 19th and 20th, whether it is to race or to time. We'd like to see you. It's time to learn how to talk to people face-to-face again.

Thank you all for granting me the privilege of serving as your board president these past two years. So long, and thanks for all the fish.

Pool Competitions

St Pete Masters Swimmers Crush It at Long Course Nationals

by John Nixon

The 2021 United States Masters Swimming Long Course Nationals were held at the Spire Institute in Geneva, Ohio from 7 to 10 October 2021. Alison Hayden, swimming in the women's 50-54 age group, Chris Stickle (men's 30-34) and Yours Truly (men's 65-69) represented SPM at the event.



Chris and Alison (photo: C. Stickle)

Alison took 1st place in the 200m and 400m freestyle, 200m butterfly (ugh), and 200m IM. She also took 2nd place in the 800m freestyle.

Chris won the 1500m and 800 freestyle, took 2nd in the 400m free, 3rd in the 200m fly, and 4th in the 100m and 200m backstroke events.

I placed 3rd in the 100m and 200m backstroke, 4th in the 200m breaststroke and 400m IM (double ugh) and 5th in the 50m back.

Results and videos of each race can be found here: [Results](#) and [Videos](#).



John Nixon, Alison Hayden, Chris Stickle (photo: C. Stickle)

Southeast Zone SCM Championship/Rowdy Gaines Classic

by Paula Texel

Twenty-three (23) SPM members traveled to Orlando to participate in the annual Rowdy Gaines Classic, which was held October 15-17, 2021. And once again, SPM brought home the championship trophy! Even with a couple of DQs on the relays (those swimmers will remain nameless in this write up...LOL!), the number of relays SPM participated in



Rowdy and the SPM ladies: Celeste, Paula, Cheryl, Tabitha, Sarah, and Phyllis (photo: S. Swoch)

put us well ahead of the second-place team. Team work truly makes the dream work!

Many SPM team members brought home high point awards. Kuddos to high point winner Chris Stickle, Cheryl Kupan, and Kern Davis!

Congratulations to everyone else who swam a great meet: Rob Bedford (new SPM member, friend of Greg Salomon, hope to see you on the pool deck with SPM again soon!), Sherri Bogue, Tabitha Brandt, Kern Davis, Jim Esposito, Sean Gerrard, Alison Hayden, Eric Herman, Adam Jerger, Cheryl Kupan, Chelsea Nauta, John Nixon, Celeste Patton, Greg Salomon, Phyllis Scheidt, Chis Stickle, Sarah Swoch, Paula Texel, Susan Tokayer, Rob Tullman, Karen Westerman,, and Mike Zabel.

Results can be found [here](#).



Championship Winners! L-R back: Sherri, Tabitha, Paula, Rowdy, Eric, Kern, Chris, Gary, L-R front: Cheryl and Sarah (photo: S. Swoch)

Going Solo

Sometimes, our members venture out to other meets on their own out of curiosity, new venues, or maybe even a bobblehead. Mike Smith was the lone SPM representative at The Villages Senior Games Swimming Event 2021 (11/6-9), winning all his events. Cheryl Kupan swam 6 stellar events at the Chris Jackson Memorial SCM Meet (12/4-5) in Coral Springs. Congratulations to you both!



A full hand (photo credit: S.)

Sarasota Shark Tank Meet

By Paula Texel

Nineteen (19) SPM swimmers traveled to Sarasota to participate in the annual Shark Tank Meet which was held November 13-14, 2021. Sarasota once again put on a wonderful 2-day meet, with lots of fast swimming in short course meters. We had some first-time competitors, including Olivia Barkley and Alyssa Harmon. Megan Howson, Russell Hawkins, and Matthew Menendez competed in their second meet. It's always great to cheer on our team members who are competing for the first time!

Of course, the trip to Sarasota would not be complete without a trip to Yoder's for their delicious pies!

Congratulations to all those who participated for SPM: Olivia Barkley, Peter Betzer, Claudio Coimbra, Jim Esposito, Alyssa Harmon, Russell Hawkins, Alison Hayden, Susan Henry, Eric Herman, Megan Howson, Cheryl Kupan, Matthew Menendez, John Nixon, Sharon Steinmann, Chris Stickle, Sarah Swoch, Paula Texel, Valerie Valle, and Ken Wazyniak.

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

Florida Senior Games

By Paula Texel



Karen and Paula, poolside (photo: K. Westerman)

Four SPM members (all meeting the requirement of being 50 years of age or older) traveled to Coral Springs on December 11-12 to participate in the Florida Senior Games. Cheryl Kupan, Mike Smith, Paula Texel, and Karen Westerman represented SPM well with many outstanding swims, including some Senior Games records! Although the group was small, everyone was very excited about their swims and also excited to see friends from around the state who traveled to compete. Paula had a personal best in the 200yd Free and Karen had a personal best in the 500yd Free! Many of our "senior" swimmers have their eyes set on Senior National Games, which will be held in Plantation May 13-16, 2022. [Information](#) can be found here.

50-54 Age Group

Paula 1st - 50 Free, 200 Free, 50 Back, 100 Back, 200 Back, 100 IM

Karen 1st - 500 Free, 400 IM, 2nd - 50 Free, 200 Free, 50 Back

55-59 Age Group

Cheryl 1st - 200 Back, 50 Breast, 2nd - 100 Fly, 100 IM

60-64 Age Group

Mike 1st - 50 Fly, 2nd - 50 Free, 50 Breast, 3rd - 100 Breast, 200 Breast, 100 IM



Mike, poolside (photo: G.)



Mike and Gloria (photo: G. Smith)

ePostal Swims



5k/10k Swim Results

Even with just 6 swimmers participating, SPM was able to pull off a 4th place team finish in the 5k race, with the women placing 4th and men placing 3rd. In the 10k event, the men pulled off a 2nd place overall finish.

Congratulations again to Chris Stickle, Kern Davis, Pat Marzulli, Sarah Swoch, Alison Hayden, and Jo Ann Harrelson!

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

3000/6000yd Swim Results

We also had a strong turnout for the 3000/6000 yd ePostals with the following finishes:

For the 3000yd event, Sarah Swoch 3rd (35-39), Alison Hayden, Paula Texal, and Tabitha placed 1st, 2nd, and 4th respectively, in the 50-54 age group, Dawn Clark 2nd in the 55-59 age group, Chris Stickle 2nd (30-34), Kern Davis 1st (65-69), Steve Freeman 4th and Pat Marzulli 5th (70-74). For the 6000yd race, Alison Hayden and Chris Stickle both won their age groups, and Dawn Clark placed 2nd. Congratulations to the distance swimmers!



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

Open Water Swimming

Fresh Start Swim Series 2021

by Celeste Patten

The Fresh Start Swim Series is composed of three separate events and held at three separate locations: St. Pete Beach, Honeymoon Island, and Madeira Beach. On October 20, 2021, the first even was kicked off on St. Pete Beach and consisted of a 500m, a 2.5k, 5k, and a 10k swim.

While most fall days in Florida are beautiful with mild to hot temperatures, unfortunately this day was not. The day started out cloudy, cool, and windy with the official water temperature being 67°. Most swimmers were well prepared for the cooler water temperatures and wore a wetsuit but other braved the cold water without one. Despite the unfavorable weather conditions, SPM was



Winners Celeste, Valerie, and Megan
(photo: M. Howson)

well represented, and all swimmers placed in the top 3 age group or overall.

10K Results

Ian Tarrant, 2nd Place Age Group
Alison Hayden, 2nd Place Overall Female

5k Results

Nathan Dean, 1st Place Age Group
Val Valle, 2nd Place Overall Female
Celeste Patton, 1st Place Age Group
Megan Howson, 1st Place Age Group

2.5k Results

Mitch Hoffman, 1st Place Age Group



Race day morning (photo credit: M. Howson)

Strategies Around Goal Setting

By Regina Novak (with article inspiration and commentary by SPM president Phil Harasz)



I spoke to a few employer groups back in December about goal setting and made a point of explaining that New Year resolutions are NOT the same as truly setting a goal.

Resolutions are wishes. Typically, we make them in haste, perhaps influenced by society or our peer group, and while we may verbalize it during holiday celebrations, it pretty much fizzles out and dies quickly. As our outgoing SPM president Phil Harasz pointed out, “amusing how the gym gets so crowded every January, only to return to normal by the end of the month.”

Setting a goal is completely different. When done correctly, our goals are written out in detail AND they include a plan of action.

Written out: When we write our goals down, we have created some accountability. We have taken an idea and formed it into something we can see. The more specific it is the better. While it’s nice to say something like “I want to swim more this year,” it’s more concrete and much more specific to

set a goal of “This year, I will swim at least 3 days per week for at least 45 minutes,” or “I will log 10,000 yards (meters) every week this year.”

Our goals should be measurable and time stamped. Swimming might be an easier topic to abide by these two things. We are in a very measurable sport, so we can say something like “I will drop my 500-yard freestyle by 20 seconds this year from 5.42 to 5.22, and I will do this by the end of this year.” It’s easy to measure, and I have stated I want it accomplished by the end of this year. And no, that’s not a personal goal but I know an 11-year-old kid who is working towards that and realistically he may get there and beyond!

Before we get into strategy and action planning, I want to make two more points about making a goal. First, it has to be YOUR goal. Don’t let your spouse, doctor, or social media blogger tell you what you should work on this year. What do YOU want to accomplish? What is important to YOU to change? Your goals are personal and need to reflect your life values.

Secondly, look beyond the pool. Set goals in other areas of your life. How is your financial fitness? Is this the year you pay off that credit card balance with the high interest rate that continues to steal your hard-earned money? What about your career or intellectual fitness? Are you bored and wanting to use more of your talents, skills and abilities to contribute to a mission important to you? Goals for fitness are great, but your overall well-being is so much more than just your physical health.

Now for the plan of action. Since Phil inspired the idea to do this and contributed some great ideas, I’ll mention a few of his discussion points.

1. “I got into a habit.” Habits form over time, and depending on what we are trying to change/correct/add, it may take longer than 21 or 30 days to cement it into our normal routine. Adding 8oz of water to your day in an effort to drink more water is a relatively small habit to change. It’s a great habit, but a smaller change than saying I am going to go from being sedentary on my couch to working out for an hour 3 days a week. Understand that the first 3-6 months may be challenging, but it does get easier. One way to help keep you going during those initial months is to really want the habit to stick because you see why it’s so important to your life.
2. “If you relapse, don’t beat yourself up, just start over.” If no one has told you before, I am here to assure you that you are not perfect in any way, so please let go of the notion that if you “messed up” you have failed. Failing AND learning is part of life. Get up and start over. Missed a workout? Go tomorrow. Went over your monthly food budget by \$100? Look at next month’s budget and figure out if you need to adjust from someplace else or make a plan of how you can stay under budget by shopping smarter or eating out less. Keep going!
3. “Do what works for you.” Along the lines of physical activity, you are more likely to stick with something you enjoy and that is feasible. This applies in every situation though. Do you enjoy reading? Maybe your intellectual goal for the year can be to read 10 minutes a day every day, or read one book per month on a topic you want to learn more about. It doesn’t mean you need to apply to get your PhD...unless you want to do that. Some of us swim and train thinking about the next meet. Others of us come for the pain relief that movement provides us. One is not better than the other; it’s just different people with different priorities and goals.
4. Schedule it on your calendar. Block time and make it a priority. When it is scheduled, it will be much harder to

avoid. Your time is valuable right? Set your schedule around what is most important. This may require you to set boundaries on your time and say no to what is not most important to make room for what is. This is a very healthy step to take and I encourage you to set boundaries in many areas of your life.

5. Start small. I am all for reaching for things and challenging yourself, HOWEVER, you need to start small and realistic to help build some self-efficacy. If a new swimmer came to Coach Gary, never having swum more than 25 yards at one time, and was given a 5,000-yard workout, we would likely lose that person forever because they would not be ready ... yet. Coach Gary would never do that. He would guide that person to start where they are so the confidence level grows, and then gradually increase the yardage. Wanting to lose 50 pounds in a year is fantastic, and one way to help along the way, is to set mini goals. Losing 4-5 pounds a month over 12 months will get you there. Start with "I am going to lose 5 pounds this month, and I plan to do that by....."
6. Have an action plan that has backup plans, and remember to extend grace to yourself. Let's say your goal is to swim 16,000 yards per week, but one week the weather is horrible, and with your work schedule and other obligations, you only got two workouts in for a total of 8,000 yards. Your backup plan could be a fitness alternative to swimming. Could you ride the stationary bike you have at home? Or maybe pull up an online fitness video and workout at home? This way you are still focused on your fitness plan, and maybe next week you check the weather or plan your schedule differently to allow you to make it to the pool those 4 days. Extend grace to yourself for pivoting considering the situation and start over next week with your original goal. Life happens and remembering that will help us keep our sanity and patience in situations beyond the pool.

At the end of every month, make a point of checking in on your progress. What happened this month? What did you learn? Do you need to adjust your action plan? What needs to be true next month to keep you on track? Don't make the goal and look at it in December. Check in every month, every week and every day to see how you are and what needs tweaking. Never underestimate the power of intentionality and small steps in a day. One little step today and every day, compounded over the course of this year, can add up to big results.

By the way, for anyone who liked that reading goal, *The Slight Edge* might be a good book to start with, especially because it aligns well with this article. We have a lot of readers on our team, so if you are looking for inspiration in that arena, just ask around, and I am sure you will find a plethora of reading options this year.

More Tips from Coach Gary

Head's UP!

Most people on the street know little or nothing about swimming. In fact, most swimmers know nothing about swimming and, if you don't believe me, just watch what happens in some of the lap swimming lanes. But there is one thing that's rather simple to learn.

It's head position. The rule of thumb used to be keeping the head high. But that was a leftover from the days when people swam with their heads out of the water. Today however, it's not head's up and it's not really head's down either. It's more of a head's in between and here's what I mean when I say that.

If you swim with your head too high, you're going to plow water with your chest. Put it too low and you'll plow it with your shoulders. The solution is to swim with your head in a "down" position but looking rather forward. Instead of looking straight forward, look slightly forward. This will keep your shoulders riding up and over the water. Besides, trying to keep your head up's tiring. So is trying to bury it in a "down" position. But relaxed, now that's the best position. Here's why:

In diving, butterfly, breaststroke, and other activities, the body follows the head. In butterfly for instance, when the head goes down, the hips come up and vice versa, giving the appearance of the undulating of the body. Rather than make the body undulate by using core muscles, it's much simpler to just put the head down when the arms enter and bring it up and forward as you pull.

Take diving. Try diving off the block with your head up and, you guessed it, your body will follow your head and you'll smack flat on the water. But, if you tuck your head in a "down" position, you'll have a smooth entry.

Likewise, when you do a flip turn, you should be thinking about what your head position's going to be. If you swim into the wall, flip (1/2 somersault), you'll end up on your back. Instead of trying to twist on the wall (hurts the knees and lower back), push off on your back, turn your head, then shoulder to the side, and your body follows. That way, you'll be on and off that wall quickly and not have to stop to adjust your body position. As you push off, twisting takes nothing away from the streamlining or speed at which you push off so there's a secondary benefit.

Then, there are times when you'll want your head carried higher. When? Let's say you're crossing over on your strokes. If you use a snorkel and look at your hands enter, you can quickly correct any crossing over because you can see what your arms are doing. But once you've corrected the crossing over, it's time to put your head back where it belongs and that's where I'll end this article.

To Pull or Push?

Believe it or not, the "pull" in a freestyle, butterfly, or backstroke is a misnomer. As we swim, we actually pull our arm towards our shoulder (using shoulder and biceps), then push it back behind us (triceps). So, "pulls" are actually half pull and half push. That means, if you've been only concentrating on your pull, maybe it's time to work on the second half of your stroke. Here's why.

Longer strokes increase distance per stroke. I've seen some lap swimmers pull only to their shoulders, then slip their elbows back and quickly recover for another stroke. I've counted 30, 40, and even 50 strokes per length by some of those swimmers. In reality, all they're doing is wetting their arms because there's very little "pull" and the push phase is nonexistent.

Now, before you quote some stroke guru, just watch (under or over water), some of the best swimmers doing freestyle. You'll see where they enter, how they stretch into the catch phase of the stroke. But then, they also push back and finish the stroke. I've seen many world class swimmers taking 30-33 strokes/50-meter length doing this and probably so have you, only we usually don't think much about it.

So, while the pull phase is important, so is finishing the stroke by pushing back. Next time you're at the pool, I want you to do two things. First, watch some of the better swimmers (even underwater if possible). Then, try it yourself and see whether it feels "weird" to finish your stroke a bit longer than before. If it feels "weird", then you have something to work at for the next several workouts. If not, good on ya' mate.

"Feel The Water"

As you warm-up, it's always a good idea to feel the water on your palm and forearm (your pulling surfaces). If you feel nothing on your forearm, you're slipping through the water rather than catching it (hence, "the catch" phase). So, here's a drill for you to try next time you warm up.

As you take your first strokes, you'll feel this more than any other time in the workout. And what is it? It's pressure on your forearm. Once you catch the water with your palm, then your forearm gets engaged and you should begin to feel pressure on your palm AND forearm as you pull back. Again, if you don't, you're slipping your elbow back. Instead, keep your elbow vertical to your palm.

It's like using a paddle in a canoe. If you slide the paddle handle back but not the paddle's face, you'll slip through the water, pulling very little of it. But, if you hold the paddle vertically throughout each paddling stroke, you'll be quite efficient and move forward quickly. Same with pulling in swimming.

So, the next time you jump in to warm up, don't just warm up. Feel the pressure on both your palm and forearm and you'll be swimming far more efficiently than ever before. And yes, it's the same with the other strokes.

Between the Lanes

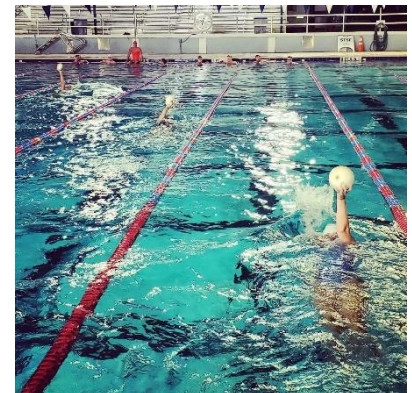
Pumpkin Relays

By Sarah Swoch

The Sharks had an impromptu practice interruption for USMS' suggestion of Pumpkin Relays before Thanksgiving. Teams were created, and we all proceeded to laugh and drink a bit of water as we tried to make it down the pool doing all the drills. Butterfliers had to get the pumpkin down the pool while staying on



Pumpkins! (photo: S. Swoch)



Relay strategies (photo: S. Swoch)



Gary Larson's The Far Side, 1986

their stomach. Some opted for tossing it down the lane, while others used it as a pull buoy. Our local water polo player had a technique to toss the pumpkin from hand to hand while swimming backstroke. The rest of us opted to steer clear of the possibility of a pumpkin to the face and choose drowning under the weight of the pumpkin held above. I guess we should work on our kick power. If only fins were legal! Breaststrokers had to hold an apple under their chin. I think Alison ate hers, the stomach is under the chin after all. Freestylers finished off the relay with apples in their hands, early vertical forearm here we come! We didn't have an official to certify the final results, but there are a few versions of the unofficial results to be had if you ask around the morning shark group.



Peter and Susan with their granddaughter Madeleine at our 2019 LCM Summer meet

The Comeback Kid - Peter Betzer

By Livia Zien

Peter Betzer says, "It's good to be back." In April 2021 Peter was excited to return to the water after a nearly a year's absence during the pandemic. He explains that while "it felt like swimming through molasses," he believed that if you set your mind to do it, you can do it. But after a few weeks of returning, one morning, he felt a strange pressure in his chest while swimming. It wasn't a muscle strain. It wasn't a pulled muscle. "It was nothing like I had ever felt before," he remembers. He tried to re-create the pain to see what it was, but was unsuccessful. Upon returning home, he told his wife, Dr. Susan Betzer who said "Call your cardiologist." Fortunately, he followed her life-saving advice because two days later the doctors found multiple arterial blockages. Five stents later, he says "Thankfully I came through my cardiac procedure and now have a clean coronary artery."

After about 3 weeks of cardiac rehabilitation, he received the 'all clear' signal from his cardiologist. Peter resumed training, starting with slow swimming and moderate walking. But by September, at the top of his age group, he was ready to compete again and entered the Clearwater's Dog Days LCM Meet, swimming his signature backstroke events. Not knowing what to expect, his first event was the grueling 200m back, which unfortunately ended with a disqualification. I'll let him tell you the story about that race. He says, "That's the first and last time that will happen!" His 50m and 100m races earned him LCM Top Ten finishes (5th in the 50m and 7th in the 100m). Then in November, he participated in the Sarasota Shark Tank meet, and his times in the 100m and 200m backstroke events earned him Top Ten places for SCM (7th and 8th respectively). He showed marked improvement in his times, dropping an equivalent of 6 seconds in the 100m, and 17 seconds in the 200m back. He is now swimming 3 times a week, and feels that he's getting closer to being back in shape.

Peter has been with the St. Pete Masters since 1973. He has been a member of our team longer than anyone except Judge Bob Beach! Thank goodness Peter knew himself well enough that something was amiss. Thank goodness he told Susan what was going on. Thank goodness he listens to his wife!

This year, Peter ages up into the 80-84 age group ... watch out everyone!



Coaches on deck at the Class 2A Region 3 Meet (photo: A. Bergeron)

Joys of High School Coaching - Teammates Take to the Deck

By Ananda Bergeron (with help from Patty Nardozzi, Aaron Peter, and Mike Buchholtz)

We all come to swim with the St. Pete Masters for the camaraderie, workouts, and great coaching, but did you know that some of our lane mates are also coaches themselves? We have several high school swim team coaches within SPM, old and new. Patty Nardozzi coaches at Shorecrest Prep, Aaron Peter and Mike Buchholtz coach at Gibbs, Lisa Flanagan at Boca Ciega High, and Dawn Clark at St. Pete High. The high

school season runs from early August to early November.

Patty has been coaching the Swim and Dive team at Shorecrest Preparatory School for 15 seasons. She says it's the hardest she works all year, but it also has the greatest reward. Patty says high school swimming is truly a team sport, and this offers opportunities for learning life lessons. The scoring of dual meets provides an example. In a six-lane pool, swimmers in individual events placing first through fifth will score points; swimmers in relays who place first through third will also score points. To maximize the team's points, sometimes a swimmer will have to swim an event that is not their best. Thinking about the team first and foremost is what she tries to get across to each and every member. Patty loves strategizing a line-up that will win the meet while giving her swimmers and divers their own personal best opportunity.

She believes that swimming can teach other life lessons as well – her coaching staff stresses being on time, being at practice every day and doing the best job that you can each and every day for that 12-week season. The payoff for Shorecrest's hard work is that they have been Girls District Champions for at least 17 years and Boys District Champions at least 13 times in the 15 years she has coached. They finish at least top 4 or 5 in their Region and send swimmers to the FHSAA 1A State Meet every year.

Aaron stepped up to coach at Gibbs High School when his daughter's team needed an assistant coach during her senior year. He had so much fun coaching that when his daughter graduated, he stayed on to coach the team another year. Gibbs shared the McLin Pool for practices with Lakewood High, each taking three lanes. Both Gibbs and Lakewood are magnet programs – Gibbs for performing and visual arts, Lakewood for advanced technologies. Both swim teams are made up almost entirely of magnet program students. During practices at McLin, the pool was split with Lakewood's scientists and mathematicians on one side and Gibbs' artists on the other. Lakewood's swimmers swam methodical straight lines. The Gibbs coaches had to try every trick in the book to keep their swimmers from breaking into song and dance.

Only a third of the Gibbs swimmers had ever swum competitively. For the rest, the coaches had to begin with their own Olympic-style swim lessons. By the end of the season, their entire team was able to perform the one-hour swim, and they sent four swimmers to Regionals.



Gibbs High at the Eagle Invite at North Shore Pool (photo: A. Bergeron)

What Aaron enjoyed the most was the on-deck interaction with so many St. Pete Masters Swimmers—coaches, officials, volunteers, meet organizers, and parents. He says the experience of being a high school coach is a strange world of amazing experiences and crazy challenges. For four months, coaches devote nearly all of their free time to a wonderful group of high schooler swimmers, helping them to grow and develop. What makes it fun for Aaron is the ability to share the experience with so many other St. Pete Masters who understand and appreciate the sport.

Mike likes many things about coaching high school swimming at Gibbs. He likes helping kids develop a skill and meet challenges in a way that's fun to them. He likes creating a safe space in which kids can be themselves and grow, and encourage each other to be themselves and grow. He likes pushing the kids to exceed their limitations while keeping practices joyful. He likes tailoring a program to the kids, meeting them where they are, finding the right way to encourage them to be the best swimmers and teammates and people they can be. And he likes seeing kids who could barely swim become strong and confident swimmers.

Mike feels inspired by how much the St. Pete Masters family helped out this season. Coach Gary, Martha Gipson and Steve Vatterott, Nancy Kiernan, and Steve Bossert all timed at the home swim meets at North Shore; Steve Freeman officiated; and Coach Gary provided valuable coaching advice.

These coaches love what they do and that is why they keep coming back year after year!

Vuzix Smart Swim

By Craig Travers and Livia Zien

Craig Travers, of Rochester, NY traveled to Orlando to participate in the Rowdy Gaines' Masters Classic 1.5k Lucky Lake Swim. He took a detour to visit Northshore Pool, gave a demo of the Vuzix augmented reality (AR) Smart Swim trainer, and generously donated a unit to the team. And Gary Bastie has generously donated his own gift from Craig to the Frogman fundraiser.

After graduating from college in the late 80s, Travers, a software engineer with a love for swimming started a business with his brother, developing virtual reality (VR) headsets, and later smaller augmented reality systems. Today, Vuzix designs computer systems that can fit into a pair of sunglasses.

He also swam occasionally, explaining that at the time, "2000 yards or 20 minutes was a big workout." But in 2012, he decided to get more serious about his fitness and joined a Masters Swim team in Rochester. He also purchased a Garmin to keep track of his laps, and remarks, "It was horrible at it. I realized then, that we could take our AR technology into the water with a far better solution, more features and options."

So, he began working on several prototypes in his basement, and have recently released the project. He explains, "It's pure joy to see a vision finally brought to life for others to utilize."

He describes how it works. "Imagine the power of your cell phone in a package small enough to fit on your swimming goggles." If you want to swim laps, all the sets and intervals can be recorded for post-analysis. The swimmer can also see a real-time clock while swimming to keep track of his or her pace. For open water swimming applications, you can see all the metrics hands free and not be required to press any buttons during the session. The session is saved and can be viewed later. And, you can also watch videos just as you would on a treadmill, while doing your training.

If you're interested in learning more about the device, a video of the 10k St. Pete Beach virtual swim can be found [here](#).

You can also go directly to his website at: <https://www.vuzix.com/products/vuzix-labs-smart-swim>.



Smart Swim for Open Water training (photo: C. Travers)

A Blast from the Past

By Livia Zien



Judge in the 40-44 age group and Dr. Ransom Arthur at NSAC (photo: R. Beach)

As you can imagine, being one of Masters Swimming's oldest teams and host to the longest continuously running swim meet (pre-COVID) of USMS, St. Pete Masters has a rich history, loaded with interesting and fun stories.

Even as late as the early 1970s, the common belief was that anyone over 30 was too old for strenuous and competitive activity. Imagine that. I guess that would leave just two age groups for Masters Swimming! Well thank goodness those 'old' people in their 40's back then ... people like Dr. Ransom Arthur, John Spanuth,

and our own Judge Bob Beach who would have none of that. They were instrumental forming the United States Masters Swimming organization, paving the way for us to participate in our sport in a manner that suits our lives, whether it be aiming for an All-American or Top Ten, personal bests, camaraderie, a reason for a second helping at dinner, or post-practice breakfasts ...

We have members who have been with the team for over 30 years watching the team grow, and I'm certain they have lots of interesting stories they can share: Bob Beach, Peter Betzer, Chris



First USMS meet at Northshore Pool (photo: R. Beach)

Swanson, Pam Geiger, Jo Ann Harrelson, Bill Specht, Lisa Flanagan, Coach Gary Bastie, just to name a few. So, if you find yourself sitting next to them at a meet, swimming or timing, or sharing a lane during practice, you might be able to nudge a story or two out of them.

For those of you who want to learn more about the beginnings of Masters Swimming, Judge Beach has shared an article written by John Spannuth. The exact date of publication is uncertain, but likely sometime in early 2000.

Stay tuned for more history of the team. For USMS history, check out <https://www.usms.org/hist/>

THE MASTERS SWIMMING PROGRAM How It Began and It's Great Potential

By John R. Spannuth

President/CEO, United States Water Fitness Association, 1998-present.

Innovator and leader in Aquatics for over 45 years.

Organized and directed the First Annual World Swimming Coaches Clinic, 1968; National Masters Swimming Meet, 1970; National Masters Synchronized Swimming Meet, 1975; National YMCA Masters Aquatic Championship, 1976.

Directed the following National Summits: National Aquatic Summit, 1998; National Adapted Aquatics, 2001; National Aquatic Directors Summit, 2002.

Former leadership positions: President, American Swimming Coaches Association, 1967-69; Secretary, World Swimming Coaches Association, 1968-70; National Aquatics Administrator, AAU, 1969-73; Executive Director International Special Olympics, 1973-74.

In 1968 when I was serving as President of the American Swimming Coaches Association, I was making an all out effort to get more coaches interested and active in the organization. Another one of my goals was to discover some untapped leadership ability within the organization. So, in 1968 I sent a questionnaire to all of the members of the ASCA asking them to indicate their interest in serving on a committee or serving as a chairperson or vice-chairperson of one of approximately thirty different committees that were to be established. The questionnaire also included a section for them to indicate other committees that they felt were needed or should be considered, and a section indicating why. One of the hundreds of questionnaires that were returned came from a Navy doctor who was stationed in San Diego, California. His name was Ransom J. Arthur, MD and he was commanding officer for the Navy Medical Neuro Psychiatric Research Unit in San Diego, California. One of the several committees that Dr. Arthur recommended was a committee to be called "swimming in older age groups." Because Dr. Arthur had volunteered to be chairman of this committee, he was immediately appointed and the committee's goals were established as to "investigate and make

recommendations to the ASCA Board concerning competitive swimming for individuals thirty years or older."

With more than thirty committees established, it was a difficult task to make sure that all of the committees were functioning, but I tried to encourage each one of the committees in some way. Because I believed in the basic principal that Dr. Arthur had written to me about, I encouraged him to write an article about this idea. After continued encouragement this was done and the material convinced me that the program definitely was needed and one of the most important factors was that it was being promoted by a group of medical doctors. Dr. Arthur and I continually communicated regarding our ideas and his committee. I must admit the idea did not receive a tremendous amount of support from very many people at that time.

After continuing communications with Dr. Arthur, I agreed to conduct the First Annual National Masters Swimming Championship at the new Amarillo Aquatic Club in Amarillo, Texas, where I was serving as Executive Director. The meet was held in 1970 and 45 individuals participated. Of this number, approximately 25 were from Amarillo, Texas area and the others traveled from as far away as the East coast and California to participate. At least five persons who swam in the meet were medical doctors. I will be the first person to admit that we were very concerned about the success of the meet because we thought there might be too much pressure involved in the competition. I can still remember the first heat of the First Annual National Masters Swimming Championship. There were three or four individuals on the starting blocks, with several being very over weight, especially around the mid section! The starting boxes were slanted and probably because of this one or two of the swimmers lost their balance and fell in when the starter said, "take your mark." The pressure at that time was really on, but when the starter said, "gentlemen, I'll give you ten minutes to get out of the water and get up on the boxes again." I knew the pressure was off! From there on throughout the meet, the fun aspect was in the

program and it helped tremendously in relieving the pressure

In May 1971, the Second Annual Masters Swimming Championship was held at the Amarillo Aquatic Club. This time 160 individuals participated. Because I was the National Aquatic Administrator for the AAU and was very interested in seeing the program established as an AAU program, I traveled from Indianapolis to supervise the meet. It was there that strategies were devised with Ransom Arthur and others to make the program become an official part of the AAU program. June Krauser took my ideas for the rules and did an excellent job of preparing them for the necessary legislation.

Because this program was so new, it was necessary to "get the word out" about the program and tell people about the many benefits that it had to offer. Dr. Arthur had indicated that the master program would make it possible to have individuals to swim from "cradle to grave."

Because I was so involved in the work that my position at the AAU required, it was not possible for me to do the job I really wanted to do in promoting the masters program. I had very strong feelings that the physical fitness aspect of the program was most important. Next, as far as importance goes, it was the social and fun aspect of the program, and third, and least important, was the competition.

It is recognized that without the tremendous effort put forth by Ransom Arthur, MD, the masters swimming program never would have been established. The program has grown from nothing in 1968 to a program that now includes thousands of people throughout the world. There is no way, at the present time, to measure the total number of persons involved in the program, but it is estimated there are well over 45,000 participants in the United States. At one of our first United States National Masters Meets, I officially named Ransom Arthur the "father of Masters aquatic programs." Since that time I've received letters calling me "grandfather of the Masters aquatic programs." This is not necessary because I get enough satisfaction out of seeing the program continue to help so many people throughout the world. Other individuals who played an important role in helping to start the program were Buster Crabbe, former Olympic champion, and movie star, who precipitated in the program, Mrs. June Krauser, who edited a publication that was distributed to

more than 1,000 individuals called *Swim Master*, and Ed Mongeon, former National Director of Water Safety for the American National Red Cross, who encouraged participation in the program and actually participated himself at one of the National Masters meets. Also participating was Dr. Paul Hüntinger, who has done a tremendous amount of research on the physiological benefits of masters swimming, Dr. James Counsilman, John B. Kelly Jr., Buck Dawson, Jane Katz, Richard Rahe, MD, who for many years was Dr. Arthur's assistant, and Judge Robert Beach, who participated in many National Masters meets and served as the first vice chairperson of the National Program.

The masters swimming program is still a new program, but many people believe the number of persons involved will surpass the number of younger age group and college swimmers in the world. This, I believe, is true. Many other sports are making efforts to get age group type programs going and that push is hurting the age group swimming program. I believe we have "cooked our own goose" telling people that successful age group swimmers must work out 3 to 5 hours each day and do nothing else except eat, sleep and go to school. It would be very sad if masters swimmers would think they need to work out 3 to 5 hours a day! It is still my feeling that success in swimming can be gained by working at or faster than the speed in practice you will use in meets. With this philosophy you do not need 3 to 5 hours per day of workout time.

To me, Masters Swimming exists for the following reasons:

1. Fitness—encouraging people to swim on a regular basis and to be concerned about their physical fitness level.
2. Fun—enjoyment and having a good time.
3. Social—meet and mix with other people
4. Measure Improvement—be timed for various events and see how you do compared to your previous times.
5. Being involved in a worth activity.

Masters swimming is here to stay and can provide people with many benefits if the proper philosophy is maintained.

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