Get Ready for One Hour Swim
By Katie O’Dair

The One Hour Swim takes place in January 2006, and all New England Masters Swimmers are invited to help us defend our 2005 OHS Title! The goal of this event is to swim as far as you can in one hour. A very simple concept! We hope that you have already planned to swim this wonderful fitness event, and will refer to the OHS information on the NEM website to plan your swim, talk it up amongst your teammates, and start getting excited about whichever day in January you choose to do the swim. For those of you who have not yet planned to do so, we ask that you read on.

The reality is this: swimmers, especially sprint specialists, loathe the one hour swim. Now, they will still do it, mind you – they just don’t enjoy it. To some, swimming the One Hour Swim is akin to running the Boston Marathon, but there are no screaming fans to cheer you on, no water stops with friendly faces, and no one in your family appreciates your accomplishment enough to put it in the family holiday card. As someone who likes distance, even I don’t enjoy the OHS, but by virtue of writing this article I am committing to it. The one hour swim is about you, your team, and NEM. Understanding this can help you gain a new outlook.

We were going to provide another list of the “Top 10 reasons to do the Hour Swim” this year because they have been so successful in the past. However, we need to reach those swimmers for whom those motivational words fell flat in past years. We must look at the OHS in a different way, to think about it in terms of what you could be doing that you would never do unless you were swimming non-stop for an hour! Therefore, the inaugural “10 Things to Do During the Hour Swim” is here. Please note: this is just a starting list – think of all the things YOU can accomplish in an hour!

1. Try not to think about dolphins.
2. Create a haiku or limerick about your swim experience. Submit your limerick to the NEM Newsletter for publication.
3. Challenge the swimmer next to you to see how many words you can make up that start with the letter X.
4. Start preparing your monologue for your Survivor video audition. Make sure a friend is there to videotape you.
5. Hum as many Journey songs as you can.
6. Imagine you are swimming to Antarctica, and then realize the water is not that cold, you don’t have grease all over your body, and you reach the “shore” every 25 yards. Appreciate this for about 15 minutes.
7. Plan the menu for the meal you will eat after completing the swim and burning 500-700 calories.
8. Write the opening chapter to that romance novel you have always wanted to write which features forbidden love between a swimmer and a dolphin trainer. Wait - you are not supposed to be thinking about dolphins.
9. Ask yourself: Was doing the OHS to get out of dressing up like Barney at your niece’s birthday party really worth it? Answer yes, and be re-energized.
10. Think about your friends and family and separate them into two groups: 1. Should wear a Speedo, 2. Should not wear a Speedo.

For more information on the One Hour Swim, refer to the NEM website:
http://www.swimnem.org/events/hourswim/prehour2006.html

Editor’s Note: Special thanks to Katie O’Dair for filling in at the last minute for Tom Lyndon. Tom, get well soon!

Homer Lane, NEM President, accepts the first place banner for USMS Club at the 2005 Colonies Zone SCM Championship

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NEM News – January 2006
http://www.swimnem.org
nemnews@swimnem.org
A Sporty Win
SCM Championship at Wheaton
By Coach Rich Axtell, Minuteman Masters Swim Club

The NEM SCM Championship meet at Wheaton College has almost become a holiday tradition for many local swimming clubs. Entries for this meet are due the week of Thanksgiving right around black Friday, the meet is held the first weekend in December, and it always snows.

Coaches usually find themselves needling their swimmers to get their entries in – and get them in on time – but this year’s participation was exceptional. Almost 400 swimmers competed, representing 14 USMS clubs and 39 different NEM workout groups. Coaches try their best to bring a full roster of swimmers since these meets are usually won with numbers. Win or lose, the best part of competition is not always holding the first place banner.

One thing that I enjoy most about competitive swimming is the challenge of unifying a team in a very individualized sport. I have always believed that individuals can better reach their potential through the power of teamwork. The theory is simple: there is no place for selfishness on a team. If there was, the New England Patriots would not have won three of the last four Super Bowls. To relate this to swimming, I reference a beginner swimmer, a fitness swimmer, or a triathlete who may not want to do the 100 butterfly in the 400 medley relay because they “can’t” or they simply “only do free.” If you remove the words “can’t” and “only do free,” incredible things start to happen. That beginner or fitness swimmer starts believing in their ability and the fact that they can actually contribute to a team competition. The triathlete who decides to do strokes in addition to freestyle becomes a well rounded swimmer and allows another relay to take shape. The reason Minuteman can show up to meets and can put together 10 relay teams is not because we simply bring huge numbers, it’s because we continually try and balance individual goals in a team environment and more importantly, no one feels that they “can’t.”

Obviously, a team environment alone can not make a swimmer finish a grueling event or finish with a legal, two-handed touch. A lot of hard, individual work goes into preparing for competition. Long hours in the pool, long commutes to and from practice, early mornings, late nights, and time away from home and loved ones are just a few of the challenges of reaching individual goals through team participation. A team victory is not possible without countless individual accomplishments. And a team victory is not just taking home the first place banner; perfectly-executed individual medley transitions, legal relay exchanges, and lots of bodies swimming the 200 fly are just a few of our team victories.

Over the years, Minuteman has enjoyed a healthy rivalry with Cambridge, Andover, and Great Bay. We bring out the best in each other – having fun, swimming hard, and being good sports. Last spring at Harvard, Minuteman and Andover demonstrated true sportsmanship after a closely contested NEM championship by lining up to shake hands and congratulate each other. This year at Wheaton, attitudes were again very sportsmanlike and swimmers enthusiastically cheered not just for the last, fastest heat in each event, but for every heat in every event.

For me, the best moment of this year’s meet was not just hearing that Minuteman had been declared the SCM Champs by the meet director. The best moment of the meet was when I turned around to see my entire team standing together on the far side of the pool. Everyone – young, old, fast, not so fast - had stayed until the end to cheer for their team, other NEM clubs, and the zone category clubs.

Walking back with the banner was nice, but walking back to a group of great sportsmen and sportswomen was amazing. As I looked at all the individual smiles, I knew I was part of something very special – a genuine team. Years of hard work by many quiet, behind-the-scenes heroes have created Minuteman and what it is today. Not only does this hard work translate into awesome camouflage team suits, it fosters an environment of sportsmanship.

Thank you to the meet director, officials, timers, scorers, and technical support that make the NEM SCM Championship possible and an always well run success. Congratulations to all of the workout groups and coaches who challenged themselves and worked hard. Last, but certainly not least, a very hearty congratulations to the Minuteman team for a very sporty win. I am proud to be your leader, friend, and Coach.

All NEM Workout Groups participating at the Colonies Zone SCM Championship are listed on page 3 in order of team score.

Minuteman Coach Rich Axtell (center) with Assistant Coach Sue Sotir (left) and Assistant Head Coach Marc Broud (right)

Scott Vankuilenburg claims 2nd place for Cambridge Masters

Rick Battistini and Michele Fox walk away with 3rd place for Andover YMCA
NEM Swim Club, Inc. Annual Meeting
By Homer Lane, President NEM

The NEM held its Annual Meeting on Sunday October 23, 2005. Tom Lyndon, the longest standing member of the Board of Directors, graciously hosted the meeting at his home in Wayland, MA. Under the Club’s Articles of Organization, the Annual Meeting must be held in October each year and is open to all Club members interested in attending.

This year’s meeting was a lively one, covering a range of topics. After a review of the minutes from the 2004 meeting, Homer Lane, Acting Treasurer, reported on the year-to-date Operating results and the Balance Sheet as of October 19, 2005. The news was not favorable as expenses including unbilled printing costs for a couple of the NEM Newsletters exceeded revenues. Factors impacting the results included a slight decline in NEM members and a conscious decision not to increase the NEM membership rate to cover the half dozen NEM Newsletters we produce each year. He also reported that the search for a new Treasurer continues and made a plea for a volunteer to take his place. Subsequent to the meeting, Nate McBride volunteered to assume this role.

Next, the group reviewed the NEM membership registrations. At the time of the meeting, NEM had 1451 members. This represented a decline from the peak levels of 1702 members in 2003 even when one factors in the 103 former members who moved to Great Bay Masters. While it was agreed that that was probably driven mainly by the registration problems experienced in 2004, there was general concern about this that impacted the discussion throughout the rest of the meeting.

Discussion moved on to the current NEM membership rate. In light of the operational losses, it was proposed that we should increase NEM membership dues from $5 to $10 per year. This would make the total cost of membership in Masters Swimming $35 ($5 for the New England LMSC, $10 for NEM and $20 for USMS) for NEM members. After some brief discussion, the attendees unanimously approved the increase. The NEM registration form and renewal information letter was also finalized.

Al Prescott, VP of Communications, reported on the Newsletter, Web-site, and Brochure. There was further discussion on NEM membership in general and specifically how we as a Club can grow the membership. This included event planning and Al was pleased to announce the new VP for Mini-meets Karen Atkinson. There was also discussion of the One Hour Swim that will be coordinated by Tom Lyndon again this year, and the SCY Championship meet that will be hosted by the Cambridge Masters Swim Club workout group. Al also suggested that we should seek to identify a new VP for Clinics to enhance the attractiveness of membership to fitness swimmers. Subsequent to the meeting, Bob Boder, aquatics director at the Charles River YMCA in Needham, was chosen as VP for Clinics. It was also agreed that we should continue our efforts to attract triathletes.

Homer then reported on other NEM business matters. He reported that the tax return for FYE 3/31/05 was filed and the Club reported a loss of $8 thousand for the year. He indicated he would be filing the Commonwealth of MA Annual Report on November 1, 2005. There was further discussion on the Club’s recognition of exemption with Homer noting that our 501c7 filing in 2003 does not provide a full tax exemption. It was agreed that this matter should be looked into further. Finally, there was some extensive discussion about succession planning for Officers and Board members. Immediate concerns include the Treasure and one Board seat as Dan Rogacki had expressed a desire to step down. Barr Clayson was nominated as a potential replacement for the Board seat, and it was agreed he should be approached.

The last topic covered was a report on the 2005 USMS National Convention. Most encouraging was the USMS evolution to a more professional organization and management. Tracy Grilli shared the new governance structure that was adopted with a President, four VP executives and eight (8) Board of Directors elected regionally. USMS has also established a Search Committee for hiring a full-time Executive Director to be located in a real National Office.

Congratulations to High Point Scorers at Colonies Zone SCM Championship
Kathy Slifer
George Coupe

Participating NEM Workout Groups

1. Minuteman Masters
2. Cambridge Masters Swim Club
3. Andover YMCA
4. ABC Masters-Gray Sharks
5. Boston LANES
6. Swim RI
7. Cape Cod Masters
8. JCC Newton Masters
9. South County YMCA
10. Granite State Penguins
11. New England Masters Unattached
12. MIT
13. YMCA of the North Shore
14. CCB Masters
15. Boston YMCA
16. Oak Square YMCA
17. Tri-Y
18. Suburban Athletic Masters
19. Hockomock YMCA
20. Ocean State Masters
21. Adirondack Athletic Club
22. Bridgewater State Masters
23. JCC North Shore
24. Keene Swim Masters
25. Lowell YMCA
26. Wheaton Wahoos
27. Fitchburg YMCA
28. Burlington YMCA
29. Ludlow Community Center
30. Boston Sports Club
31. Kingsbury Club
32. Longfellow
33. Duxbury (Percy Walker)
34. Wheelworks
35. Attleboro YMCA
36. North Suburban YMCA
37. Brown
38. Smithfield YMCA
39. Blue State Masters
Upcoming Meets

**January**
**One Hour Swim**
Any Pool
http://www.swimnem.org/events/hourswim/prehour2006.html

**January 22 (Sunday)**
**Mid-Maine Masters Winter Warm-Up**
Alfond Youth Center; Waterville, ME
Warm-up at 9 AM; meet starts at 10 AM. Meet Director and contact #:
Anne Uecker, (207) 465-4877

**February 5 (Sunday) - Tentative**
**New England Masters Mini Meet**
Phillips Exeter Academy; Exeter, NH
Warm-up at 8 AM; meet starts at 9 AM. Must be done by Noon

**February 11 (Saturday)**
**Mid-Coast Masters Swim Meet**
Penobscot Bay YMCA; Rockport, ME
Warm-up at 12 Noon; meet starts at 1:00 PM. Meet Director & Contact #:
Kristi Panayotoff (207) 789-5166.

**February 12 (Sunday)**
**The Masters Sprint Classic**
JCC of the North Shore; Marblehead, MA
Warm-up at 12:30; Details to Follow.

**February 25 (Saturday)**
**Maine Masters Swim Meet**
Casco Bay YMCA; South Freeport, ME
Warm-up at 12 Noon; meet starts at 1:00 PM. Meet Director & Contact #:
Sean Carter (207) 712-8853 or Sean.Carter@tdbanknorth.com.

**March 12 (Sunday)**
**Maine Masters Swim Meet**
Bangor YWCA; Bangor, ME
Warm-up at 10 AM; Meet Start at 11 AM.
Meet Director: Sterling A. Dymond III at (207) 942-3148.

**March 18 (Saturday)**
**NEM SYC Championships**
Harvard University; Cambridge, MA
Distance Day (1000 and 1650). Details to Follow.

**March 24-26 (Friday-Sunday)**
**NEM SYC Championships**
Harvard University; Cambridge, MA
Details to Follow.

All swimmers at masters meets must be USMS registered! If you have not already done so, now is the time to renew your membership.  http://www.swimnem.org/general/about.html