

NEM News

the New England Masters Swim Club, Inc., newsletter

March 2009

Making a Difference

Issue # 903

Middlebury Muffintops Brave Chill for Charity

Don't let the lingering winter weather here in New England get you down: if you're brave (or nuts enough) you can still get in some open water swimming! On February 7, 2009, a hearty group of Middlebury Muffintop Masters proved that it's never too cold to swim outside for charity. The intrepid group of swimmers raised \$5,240 for the Vermont Special Olympics by jumping into a frozen Lake Champlain as part of the 2009 Penguin Plunge. All told, the fundraising event raised close to \$250,000 for Special Olympics with over 700 people participating. Steve Holmes, a very brave (or perhaps crazy?) Muffintop has a survivor's tale:

Let me tell you, the Penguin Plunge was cold! That should go without saying. Anytime a pool is covered with two feet of ice, you know it is not swimming weather. Notwithstanding, it was for us...

The team put on swimsuits and then went to a tent to await our turn to jump into Lake Champlain's 32.5 degree water. Our team number was 46. When we arrived at the waiting area they were only up to team number 35. Do you know when you go to the DMV you have to wait in line forever, hoping and praying you'll get your turn? Well, this was nothing like that. It was more like a countdown to an imminent, icy demise. It was during this wait that Jessica and a few of the other die-hards decided they were going to crank it up a notch and swim to the other side of the opening, about a 25 yard round-trip. Maybe 30. By the way, let me add, no one else on our team or any other team was making the whole journey.



The Middlebury Muffintops pose for one last warm photo in the staging area tent before heading out to the lake for a frigid dip for charity.



The Muffintops run into a very cold Lake Champlain. Notice the abundance of icicles on the handrail and the presence of rescue workers surrounding the small open area in the otherwise frozen-over lake.

Our team number was called and we ran out towards the lake, stopping to take a few good-natured pictures, then launched into the icy water at full speed. Oh my god! Let me rephrase that. Oh my god! It was freezing! My body immediately stopped working. My legs froze. My arms froze. My chest contracted so much it was impossible to breathe. My one and only thought was "Get me the hell out of here!" It was a complete and total mammalian, life-preserving reflex. I turned around and slogged my way back to the shore, which must have taken 10 times as long to get to as it took going in the water, as not a single one of my muscles would respond to mental commands.

Meanwhile, Jessica, Chris, and Basi (the die-hards), swam out to the far side of the ice and were heading back. I saw Jessica had lost her shoes, Crocks. From reading the stories on the Internet I knew she would need them to keep her feet from freezing to the pavement on the way out of the lake, so I yelled, "Don't forget your Crocks!" Which is not really accurate. As I had said, every one of my muscles had shut down, including my tongue, so my warning cry came out more like "Duuhhn fuuugnnuuu u cruuus." The three die-hards, who regularly swim 10-15 miles per week, were having a really hard time making it 80 feet. The cold water caused Jessica to try to swim in the fetal position, arms working about as well as those of a T-Rex. Long, lean swimming strokes were replaced with a combination doggie-paddle/moonwalk. Actually, come to think of it, her swimming looked more like she was trying to make shadow puppets of geese. For someone as comfortable in the water as a dolphin, she had a look of complete terror on her face while the rescue



Back on dry land. Still freezing, but happy to be alive. If you count, you'll notice we lost two Muffintops from the 1st photo [in the warm tent]. We're hoping to find them sometime after the spring thaw.

Photos courtesy of Katie Holmes.



Minuteman Masters are always out in force at these meets! Here Al Prescott, Kim Pudlo, Chris & Jason all cozy up for a quick photo opportunity.



Above, Patty Anderson, Sheryl Scott, Karin Stokes, Gavin Benson, Allison Burke, Beth Estel, Allison Dixon, and Dan Rogacki clown around in between swims.

USMS and USA Swimming Officials Bob Fredette & Suzanne Avella make sure all the rules are followed to the letter.



No meet could ever happen without the dedicated efforts of an army of volunteers. Below, workers David Grilli & Karen Scavicus take a quick break from running the meet.

Below, Tom Mack chills out before his events.



workers on the side of the ice had the look of “There’s always some ding-a-lings who try to swim across and back.” Well, they did make it back, but later asked me why I didn’t join them. Yeah. As if.

The Muffintops regrouped for a very quick photo on the way back to the warming tent. On the way in, I yelled over my shoulder to my daughter Katie, our team photographer, “Did you get any good pictures?” (pronounced “dooo yooo geeee guuuu p-p-p-p-p-p-p-pictuuuu?”) She yelled back “No! Go back in!”

We made it to the warming tent, dried off, got changed, and then for the next 17 hours slowly warmed up. It’s been a full 24 hours and I think I’m almost back to normal. One more hot apple cider with butterscotch schnapps and I should be there.

Thanks to everyone who donated. There should be an open spot on the team if you are looking for a nice place to swim next February.— **Steve Holmes, Middlebury Muffintops**

To see more photos, visit: www.middleburymuffintops.org

Phillips Exeter Mini-Meet, a February Tradition in Pictures

On February 1, 2009, 63 swimmers from four teams splashed 223 times at the Phillips Exeter Short Course Yards mini-meet held at the Phillips Exeter Academy in Exeter, New Hampshire. Tracy Grilli of the Granite State Penguins (also the USMS National Administrator) sent in some photos from the event. Full results are available online at:

www.swinnem.org.results/2009/PE_09_Results.PDF

Want to host a mini meet at your facility? Contact Walter Lincoln at: lincolnwjd@yahoo.com to find out how.

Boston Elite Swim Team Seeks Volunteers, Donations

I'd like to pass along to the New England Masters community a request for help from BEST, the Boston Elite Swim Team and the affiliated Different Strokes, a program to teach inner-city youth to swim.

Parents of BEST swimmers would like to meet Masters swimmers who would be interested in helping with the coaching of the team or teaching swimming lessons.

They are also soliciting donations to help pay for BEST's participation in the National Heritage Meet on Memorial Day in North Carolina.

Swimming is not a sport with large minority group participation. Any swimmer or swimmer's parent would have been moved to hear the excitement and pleasure recently expressed by a BEST parent for her children's participation in the National Heritage Meet last year, where a spectrum of minority swimmers were in the majority and the atmosphere on deck was electric with music, pride, and the celebration of inclusiveness.

BEST parents have become very excited about the benefits of swimming for their children. Although swimming is expensive, it is not as expensive as other sports. And as we all know, it is healthy, teaches discipline, offers the excitement of competition at many skill levels, and pulls people together socially in ways we all enjoy.

Please contact Charlie Skeele (North Suburban YMCA Workout Group) at cskeele@comcast.net if you would like to meet the BEST parents who organize this group and get involved helping them build a strong swimming program for their children.

Parents of the team have provided some background on their evolving program:

Boston Elite Swim Team (BEST) is still in its building stage so we are seeking as much help as possible. We are looking for instructors as well as coaches. A background in competitive swimming is a plus but not mandatory. We are looking for someone who has lifeguard and/or WSI certification or would be willing to obtain it



Some of the BEST swimmers in Boston.

this spring and we are willing to connect them with a class for minimal cost.

We work in partnership with BCYF's Community Centers & Bernal Gator Swim Club to increase the city of Boston's representation, education, numbers, and access to the USA Swimming arena, therefore gaining greater access for our inner-city children/swimmers to obtain jobs, training and student athletic scholarships, avoiding any missed opportunities.

This program also focuses on swim instruction supporting the community as it relates to lowering the minority drowning rate, based on the recent study identifying that 58% percent of black children can't swim.

One of BEST's initial goals was to establish a conduit for inner-city swimmers to have access to swimming in the same arena as USA level swimmers. The reason for this not happening is largely the financial commitment necessary for training and participation on suburban private teams, lack of education around the sport, and inner-city families being unaware of USA swimming. The program was initiated to help raise awareness and funding to support children who have the ability and are interested in competing at this higher level yet are unable to access funding. Along with this goal the support of an educational avenue being implemented relative to the sport was identified, that is, coaching and parental education. This is entirely necessary to build an infrastructure to provide the ability for a more accurate level of training to occur right within the inner-city. Proper education is critical for swimmers as they enter and are engaged in an era where so many aspects of life are competitive. This is our schedule for the short and long course season 2008-2009:

Swim Lesson Times

Madison Park Community Center, 55 New Dudley Street, Roxbury, Massachusetts 02119, (617) 635-5209

Tuesday & Thursday 7:00-8:00pm
 Friday 7:00-8:00pm
 Saturday 10:00-11:00am

Ages: 3-18 years of age

Time duration of lessons are determined by swim instruction level
 Lessons are offered on a monthly basis

Swim Team Practice Times

Madison Park Community Center

Tuesday & Thursday 6:45-8:30pm
 Friday 6:45-8:30pm
 Saturday 10:00 am-12:00pm

One of our major constraints in the inner-city is swim instructors and coaches to teach BEST'S uprising swim team and our learn-to-swim program. The parents and swimmers of BEST will appreciate any help that Masters swimmers can provide.

We are in need of coaching, especially for our upcoming Memorial Day travel meet in North Carolina. And we would appreciate any and all donations to help pay for our trip. Many thanks for your help! Please e-mail Charlie Skeele at cskeele@comcast.net if you would like to volunteer for or give to BEST.— **Charlie Skeele, North Suburban YMCA**

Not Frazzled by Competition

Cartoonist Jef Mallett talks about the joys of Masters swimming and triathlon

You've probably seen his work in the *Boston Globe* or another paper that carries nationally-syndicated comic strips. It's that intellectually wry cartoon about a janitor in an elementary school that some people have said looks like the second-coming of *Calvin and Hobbes*.

Except that the most swimming any of us have probably ever seen Calvin and Hobbes do was during bath time, not a full Ironman race or a 5-mile crossing of the Mackinac Straits.

Jef Mallett is the Michigan-based artist behind the eponymous comic strip chronicling the life and times of witty, underachieving elementary school janitor Edwin "Frazz" Frazier, a lanky character who bears a clear resemblance to his creator in more than just stature and hairstyle.

Any frequent reader of Mallett's strip knows that Frazz is an athlete competing mainly in triathlons, but also in cycling and swimming races who lets himself in for some humbling at the hands of "swimming specialists" (Masters swimmers) at a few meets a year.



Photos and cartoons courtesy of Jef Mallett

In many ways, Frazz's story is Mallett's own; the resemblances in character are by design. Mallett purposely made *Frazz* more about his life, which means that he's tasked himself with leading a life worthy of translation to art. "I write my life, and then have the [mandate to lead the] most interesting life I can. It's nice to have to be interesting. Every writer gets back to autobiography one way or another, so I decided to just be direct about that." Mallett says.

Everything in Mallett's life can be potential content for a *Frazz* strip, though Mallett admits that "Frazz is a lot cooler than I am. There is some exaggeration there."

Searching for a Sport

Mallett's winding road to triathlon— and Masters swimming as the primary swim training tool he uses to prepare for races— started in part because of his anti-competition competitiveness. He says that in high school, he wasn't much of an athlete. "I was fit, but I was a head case. I didn't buy into the whole 'winning is everything' mentality or the pressure. I was a total loss on game day, but I was healthy and a little hyperactive." That personality led him to seek the "right sport."

That was in the late 1970s, right about the time that triathlon emerged as its own sport. In 1979, a *Sports Illustrated* reporter in

Hawaii covering a golf tournament stumbled across the second Hawaii Ironman, (at that time still held in Oahu, not yet in Kona) and instead of filling a report on the golf tournament, the reporter produced a 10-page spread on the triathlon. "I saw that magazine and I said to myself, 'As soon as I learn to swim, that's my sport.'"



Frazz creator Jef Mallett poses with his wife before the start of the Mackinac Straits 5-mile swim, September 2007

Mallett made good on that promise, and within a few years, was competing in his first triathlon in Traverse City, Michigan. "I did really well. It was a big race for the time with over 300 people. I came in 9th, and I'm thinking, 'Wow, I'm Hawaii-bound!'"

However, this jubilation lasted only until Mallett got his splits, which showed him in black and white what he already knew. "I looked at the splits and saw that all I could do was bike. I was totally miserable with the swim, smoked the bike, and the run was a matter of hanging on." From that point, Mallett launched into bike racing and got quite good at it.

But then— not yet a full-time cartoonist— Mallett's professional career changed paths and eventually he left cycling for triathlon. He struggled with injury for a time, and during that break from training and racing, he started the work that morphed into *Frazz*. When that business had stabilized and he had finally quit his day job, Mallett says he was ready to get back to competing. "By then, bike racing looked like a bad idea. I was now making this living with my hands, and there's a potential for problems there if I get in an accident, so I got back into triathlons and was more careful about it. And it's sticking."

Training and Racing

So many would-be athletes and fitness nuts get stuck on the idea that there's just not enough time in the day to fit in getting to the gym. But as most of us know, it's often the reverse— the busier you are, the more you need the workouts and the more efficient they make you. Mallett falls into this category of athlete. "An hour spent training is not an hour lost. It makes you more efficient, because when you have less time to waste, you waste less time."

Part of wasting less time and being efficient for Mallett is following a plan. "I've found that I have to have a plan. I don't train to race. I race to train, and that keeps me focused," he says.

Mallett does as much of his training outside as he can, but living in Michigan poses a challenge to his outdoor workouts in the winter. He worked with a coach for a few years, which allowed him to go injury-free, and that's made a big difference.

While Mallett has completed a range of different lengths and types of triathlon races, his favorite is the half Iron distance. The biggest race he has completed so far in terms of distance is the Florida Ironman held in Panama City. While Mallett says he doesn't have any realistic hope of qualifying for the Hawaii Ironman in Kona anytime soon, he is focusing on doing more Iron distance races and will be competing in a race in Louisville, Kentucky this summer.

Swimming the Straits

In addition to swimming in Masters meets and triathlons, Mallett is also an open water swimmer. In 2007, he swam the Straits of Mackinac, a lengthy 5-mile trek from one end of the bridge to the other. Prior to that swim, the furthest Mallett had ever swum in open water was the 1.2 mile swim portion of a half Ironman.

"It was put on by Jim Dreyer in conjunction with the annual Labor Day Mackinac Bridge Walk [a major event in the area that attracts crowds of 50,000 or more walkers every year] and there were about 50 of us who did the swim. So, while all these people were packed onto the bridge elbowing each other, we were underneath swimming. It was terrific. I had never done anything like that before. It was really a day for the lifetime highlight reel."



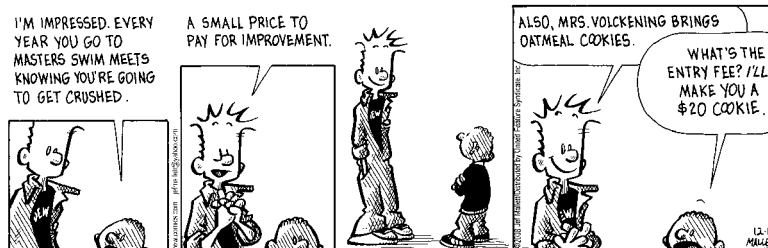
Mallett at the end of the Mackinac Straits swim.

In a typical year, Mallett says he completes about a half dozen triathlons and a few other events such as marathons, shorter runs, cycling races, and some open water races. This year, he plans to do about four or five events. "When I'm training for an Ironman, I do fewer total races, and I'll do some other non-tri races. This year, I wanted to do an April marathon. One of the things that Ironman taught me is that I'm a better swimmer and cyclist than I am a runner, so training for a marathon made sense."

However, his duties as a national figure have impinged upon his plans for this race. "I'm going to Germany with a USO trip and will be drawing for soldiers in the hospital there, so I don't know if I'll be able to do the marathon." While he'll probably miss the race, Mallett is excited to visit the troops overseas and to honor their contribution. "Missing that race is going to look small in comparison to what they've sacrificed."

Mastering the Swim

Mallett is modest about his swimming abilities, but is a big fan of Masters swimming all the same. "I still



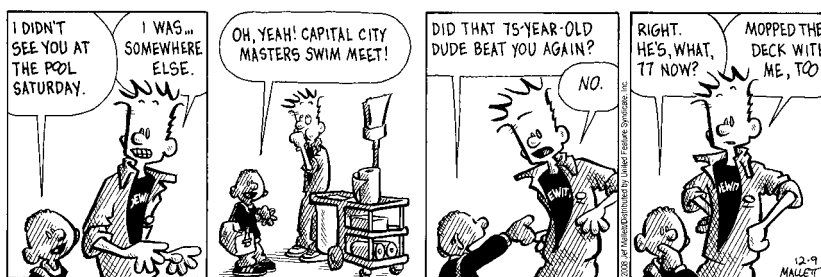
swim like a guy who learned to swim as a young adult, rather than as a child," Mallett says, but he goes to a few Masters swim meets per year, "because it's fun and keeps me honest." And if Frazz is to be believed, it's due at least in part to the cookies.

That, and of course, the other swimmers. "The people are great! I have never gone to a Masters meet and felt looked down upon because I was slow, or because I wore a wet suit at an open water race. I do Masters swimming during the winter, and it would be the easiest thing in the world to skip, except that I like the people too much. And you get a heck of a workout."

Mallett says that at a Masters swim meet, there's an energy that helps focus him on goals while not making him feel self-conscious about his place within the spectrum of abilities. "Some swimmers are there to win, but most are there because they want to compete," and the difference between competing to the best of your ability and winning is an important distinction. At a Masters meet, Mallett says "you can compete without adversaries. You're competing with the other swimmers, but they're not against you, they're allied. It's interesting."

At the end of the day, Mallett says that swimming Masters and participating in triathlon is all about finding a balance and enjoying what you're doing. And it's about finding the right sport for you, whether that's one in which you can dominate the competition or one that just makes you happy. Mallett says with swimming, he ascribes to the latter philosophy, "I'm not going to impress or scare anyone with my swimming, but I really, really enjoy it." — **Elaine K. Howley, NEM News Editor**

Jef Mallett is currently working on *Trizophrenia: Inside the Minds of a Triathlete*, a "why-we-do-it book" to be published by Velo Press (www.velopress.com) in fall 2009 that has evolved from the columns he writes for *Inside Triathlon* and *Triathlete Magazine*. (<http://triathlon.competitor.com/>)



The Decline of Swimming, Part IV

On February 20, 16 major swimsuit manufacturers met in Lausanne, Switzerland with the representatives from the Executive and Technical Swimming Commission, Legal, and Coaches and Athletes Commissions of FINA— the international governing body of swimming— to discuss the next generation of speed suits. According to a press release from FINA, the Speedsuit Summit was convened “in order to examine amendments to the current ‘FINA Requirements for Swimwear Approval.’” The meeting focused on ways to standardize the technology incorporated into the various types of suits to make it fairer for the manufacturers, and, in an effort appear not so altruistic, the swimmers as well.

FINA to Re-examine Swimsuit Rules at March Meeting in Dubai

A FINA press release published by *Swimming World* says the world governing body of swimming will reexamine its rules for swimwear in international competitions at a meeting to be held March 12-14, 2009, in Dubai, United Arab Emirates.

The FINA Bureau will consider amendments to its current policy which will include:

Design. The swimsuit shall not cover the neck and shall not extend past the shoulders nor past the ankles.

Materials. The material used shall have a maximum thickness of 1mm; when used, the material shall follow the body shape; and the application of different materials shall not create air trapping effects.

Buoyancy. The swimsuit shall not have a buoyancy effect of more than one Newton (100gr).

Construction. Any system providing external stimulation or influence of any form (e.g. pain reduction, chemical/medical substance release, electro-stimulation) is prohibited.

Customization. All swimsuits of an approved model must be constructed in an identical fashion with no variation/modification for individual swimmers from the samples submitted for approval.

Use. The swimmer can only wear one swimsuit at a time.

Control. FINA will establish its own independent control/testing program. Scientific testing will be conducted by a team led by Professor Jan-Anders Manson, from the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology (EPFL) and Laboratory of Polymer and Composite Technology.

Approval. Swimwear manufacturers will be able to make submissions for approval of swimsuits until March 31, 2009.

One of the main aspects to be considered is the limitation of the use of non-permeable material, also known as neoprene.

“With these amendments, FINA shows that it continues to monitor the evolution of the sport's equipment with the main objective of keeping the integrity of sport. While we need to remain open to evolution, the most important factors must be the athletes' preparation and physical condition on achieving their performances,” FINA President Mustapha Larfaoui said in the press release.

Bet you never knew how much engineering actually goes into that skimpy half-yard of fabric.

While I applaud the decision to at least meet each other and have the “airing of the grievances,” the result will be the same. There may be a standardization but there will certainly be a new interpretation of what is allowed to make a swimmer faster. Whatever. The bottom line is, until they allow full neoprene suits (and they are close, just look at the blueseventies— yes, they ARE wetsuits) the records will begin to taper off and then swimming will become what it is SUPPOSED to be: human vs. water. So what if swimmers don't make it to boxes of cereal only to later be kicked off. Whatever happened to taking pride in hard work and getting what you get as a result and being happy with it?

But that's not all. There is a NEW future tragedy brewing in swimming. In the March issue of *Swimming World*, Brent RuteMiller discusses what swimmers are doing now to compress their muscles UNDERNEATH the suits that are already compressing them. They are now duct-taping and using special compression tapes to bind their muscles together in order to achieve better muscle control, blood flow, and yes, more of a streamline. Women are now duct taping their breasts underneath their suits so as to achieve the same chest induction effect as men. Are you kidding me? This is not new stuff (just about every sport at the Olympics had athletes using compression tape like the Kinesio stuff) but it is now being

Upcoming Meets

3/15 - Tri-Community Y Winter Break Masters Meet

Southbridge, MA at the Tri-Community YMCA pool. Sunday, March 15th. Warmup at 8:30am, meet starts at 9:00am. See information form for more details.

http://www.swimnem.org/entryforms/triy_mm_09.pdf

3/21, 3/27-3/29 - NE LMSC SCY Championships (*sanctioned)

New England LMSC SCY Championships to be held at the Blodgett Pool, Harvard University, Boston MA on Saturday March 21st, 2009 and Friday - Sunday March 27th-29th, 2009 (distance day is March 21). Warm-up all 4 days, 8:00 am, meet start 9:00am. Entry form and Information form are now available.

Please go to www.meetresults.com/2009/nelmsscsc/. For more information, e-mail meet director Rick Osterberg at: nelmsscsc@meetresults.com.

4/24-4/26 - Colonies Zone Short Course Yard Championships

Entry form now available at:

www.swimnem.org/entryforms/09ColoniesZones.pdf

6/7 - 2nd Annual Rhode Island Ocean Tides Senior Games

Roger Williams University, Bristol, RI, open to swimmers 50 years old and over. Contact Nancy Dobie for more information:

rhodytides@aol.com

6/26-6/28 - NELMSC Long Course Championships (*sanctioned)

2009 New England Long Course Meters Championships to be held at Middlebury College on Friday June 26th, 2009 - Sunday June 28th, 2009. Warm-up times Friday 12pm, Sat 8am, Sun 8am.

Jessica Holmes at jholmes@middlebury.edu. Meet website: www.middleburymuffintops.org/LCMChamps/default.aspx

uncovered as something that is actually pretty widespread in collegiate, age group, and national level swimming.

In this new, anything-to-get-an-edge sports world, this is completely not surprising. The evolution of the decline of swimming continues. I would estimate that we are only two or three steps from drug use coming back into swimming and being exposed. And I am not talking weed here— look at cycling and you have your future of swimming. Because after you have done the special suits and the compression taping and the molded silicone caps on top of the molded latex caps and the breast reductions and the vasectomies and the foot enlargement and the tendon extensions— the only thing that's left is to attack the physiological aspects from the inside out.

Oh, well. Here's to the swimmers who work their asses off day after day and at the end are satisfied with the result, whatever it may be. And to you swimmers who will cut every corner available, once again, shame on you. You are not a swimmer and you are sending the sport into a decline. The people will forget you.— **Nate McBride, Westside Swim Club, NEM Webmaster**

Editor's Note: In a postscript to his article, Nate posted the following Letter to the Editor about the speed suit issue on the Westside Swim Club web site at: www.swimwestside.com.

In the March edition of the ASCA Newsletter, George Kennedy, Head Coach for Johns Hopkins, wrote this letter to the editor:

Hey John [Leonard]—

Just a short note to say that I have decided to fight the battle the only real way and let our top coaches in Division III know that we will not be wearing any of the new suits this year— regardless if any of them use them. I sent the e-mail yesterday and it has drawn a myriad of responses. To me, it is much more about values and what we teach our athletes— that wearing the new suits have nothing to do with "getting it." "Getting it" is a phrase overused, but in our program it means that it is the athlete's responsibility to get better through hard work, doing something every day towards improvement, communication and desire. We as coaches provide the environment and culture and they either "get it" or not. We tell them there is "no free lunch" and how they will need all that we teach them out in the "real world." So, our kid who goes 48.9 in the 100 back from last year's NCAAs has set his goal to go 47, using the same suit he used last year. It is truly the only way that "getting it" can help him accomplish his goal. I am very thankful for people like you who are passionate about what is right and what we are teaching young people. All the best,
George Kennedy

It is letters like this which give me hope. George, you rock.— *Nate*

Short course championship season is coming! Triathlon season is coming! Frustrated by the same technical issues, or just need a tuneup? Take action! Oceanus Consulting's professional swim instruction and video analysis is here to help you! Visit www.oceanus-consulting.com or call 781-316-2557 for more information.

NEM News: The New England Masters Swim Club Inc., Newsletter

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June Championships Coming Soon!

As the temperature drops into the single digits for hopefully the last time this winter, it is time to start making summer plans and we hope that your plans include this year's New England Long Course Meters Championship to be held again in Middlebury, Vermont, June 26-28, 2009. Meet information has been posted on the meet website at:

<http://www.middleburymuffintops.org/LCMChamps/default.aspx>.

Browse our website to see results and pictures from 2007 and 2008, as well as this year's event order and meet info. Lodging information has also been posted and we encourage you to reserve your rooms early. We had a 50% increase in attendance from 2007 to 2008 and we expect more growth this year.

The Saturday social has become a great success with over 100 swimmers celebrating the weekend's events. It is a great opportunity to meet new friends and catch up with old ones. Last year's speaker, Hodding Carter, author of the book *Off the Deep End*, was a huge hit. We do not have a guest speaker lined up for this year, but we welcome any suggestions or connections you may have.

For those of you on Facebook, we have set up a group called "2009 New England LCM Championships." We hope this will become a place to post requests for carpools, find roommates, post meet pictures (a few have been posted already), find out about activities in Middlebury and most of all, generate publicity about the meet. Best wishes in your training and I hope to see you at Harvard and Middlebury!— **Jessica Holmes, Middlebury Muffintops**

Still Looking for Meets After All These Years

It's hard to believe that I won my first swimming medal close to 70 years ago and I still have it. On one of my first dates with my wife Cathy, I gave her my 300 IM medal. The year was 1954 and you could swim either the breast or butterfly (dolphin did not exist). We both knew we'd be together a long time and going to a lot of meets.

Swimming began at the Boys' Club in Charlestown, Massachusetts in a 20-yard gutter pool with four lanes. We had two practices a day and a meet every Saturday in the Massachusetts-Rhode Island area. Monday was the worst day because after the filters were backwashed each Monday, the pool level would be at least 3" below the gutter. The water temperature at the pool was around 65 degrees and the air was 70 degrees. We had no towels, but we did have sweat suits which soon became wet suits. The deck was three feet wide and the splashes from kicking would hit the ceiling. A good portion of the pool's water wound up on the deck.

My goal was to go to Yale because they had great swimming teams in the late 1940s and early 1950s. In case you're wondering why not Harvard, the swimming team was not doing well. Bob Kiputh, Yale and Olympic swimming coach, was a big supporter of the Boys' Clubs and New England AAU swimming. We had a lot of meets at Yale and practices at his workouts during the December holiday breaks. The holiday before the year I graduated from high

school, I let Bob know that I would like a swimming scholarship to Yale. At the end of our practice after 10 X 50s, at 27 seconds with a 30 second rest in between, he called me over with his arm on my shoulder. He said, "You're a good swimmer but your feet are too small, etc." My feet are still small at six-and-one-half inches. He was very instrumental in getting me a swimming scholarship to UCONN and I continued to swim at his December practices.

My six-and-one-half paddles are still going strong. Now we need your help to find meets for the fall of 2009, September through December. E-mail me at lincolnwjd@yahoo.com for more information— **Walter Lincoln, NEM Meet Coordinator**

News from the LMSC

The New England Local Masters Swim Committee (NE-LMSC) is the USMS governing body for New England. All clubs in Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Maine, New Hampshire and Vermont are members of the NE-LMSC.

So what is going on at the LMSC that impacts you? A lot!

First, we are updating our New England Records database. Ed Gendreau is leading this effort. Very soon you will be able to look up all your Top Ten swims on-line, no matter what course (SCY, SCM, LCM) you swam. This database will replace the traditional Top Ten tallies that individual records chair-people had to manually maintain.

Second, we will be rolling out a new website this summer. Details to follow.

Third, and in my opinion one of the most exciting new developments, we will be creating a New England Hall of Fame for Masters Swimmers. This was a fantastic idea by Jessica Holmes of the Middlebury Muffintops and is currently being developed by Paul Griffen. Ultimately, we expect inductions for Hall of Famers to begin in 2010. We will also recognize annual New England All-Stars, as well as perform special recognition where appropriate.

I hope you are as excited as I am with these efforts. We will be discussing this and more at the LMSC meeting this summer so keep your eyes open. In the meantime, swim fast and train well.— **Al Prescott, Minuteman Masters, NE-LMSC Chair**

Planning your summer?

Think about spending August 8th proving your mettle by taking part in the oldest open water race in the country, right here in New England. The Boston Light Swim is an 8-mile race from the Boston Harbor Lighthouse on Little Brewster Island to the L Street Bathhouse in South Boston that has been contested since 1907 in the chilly waters of Boston Harbor. It is the ultimate in open water swimming challenges!



Check out the newly redesigned and updated website for all the details on how you or your relay team can become a part of swimming history!

Registration opens on April 4th, 2009. There is a cap of 20 solo swimmers and 5 relays in the field, so register early. Happy swimming!

www.bostonlightswim.org



NEM News also available in full-color on-line at www.swimnem.org

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