

NEM News

the New England Masters Swim Club, Inc., newsletter

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Summer Lovin'

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Third Time Charming for NELCM Champs at Middlebury College

For the third year in a row, the speedy Middlebury College pool produced some blazingly fast times at the New England Long Course Meters Championships over the weekend of June 26 to 28. Swimmers walloped 44 New England records plus five Canadian national records.

Susan Livingston of North Shore Jewish Community Center (Marblehead, MA), swimming in the women's 70-74 age group, took down more New England records than any other swimmer, with five records. Not one to shy away from the toughest events, she broke records in the 400 IM (8:31.99), the 200 fly (4:27.09), the 200 IM (4:00.20), and added the 50 and 200 back for good measure (48.31 and 3:40.80). Next in line for the record books were Jessica Holmes of the Middlebury Muffintops and Michael Linehan of Cambridge Masters, who broke four New England records each. Jessica broke all three women's 35-39 backstroke records (34.52, 1:13.67 and 2:41.17) plus the 200 IM in 2:40.25 while Michael Lenihan did the same in the men's 25-29 breaststroke events (32.74, 1:13.85, and 2:47.53) also adding the 200 IM in 2:29.69. Glenn Dixon of Cambridge Masters also broke four records, though he only will be holding on to three of them, as he was touched out in the men's 45-49 100 back (1:07.71) by Doug Pride (1:07.11). Glenn's other records came in the 100 fly, almost breaking a minute in 1:00.25, 200 IM, 2:27.67, and 200 back, 2:24.68. John Radimer, swimming for the Middlebury Muffintops, was nipping at the heels of the other record-breakers, claiming three records in the 60-64 age group: 100 free in 1:03.07, 50 free in 28.61 and 50 fly in 30.56. Not to be outdone, Roma Hunter broke three records in the women's 40-44 age group: 50 back in 34.76, 1:14.28 in the 100 back, and 2:52.05 in the 200 back. Kim Walker, Cheryl Kupan, and Jessica Knight broke two New England records each. Kim took the 18-24 50 breast in 38.24 and the 100 breast in 1:22.87, and Jessica in the 25-29 50 free in 28.21 and 50 fly in 30.00 while Cheryl, swimming in the 45-49 age group, gritted out records in the two most difficult 200s: 200 fly in 2:59.17 and 200 breast in 3:19.54



Bill Boomer discusses technique with members of the Maine Masters team.

Photo courtesy of Bob Johnston



The West Side Swim Club of Sudbury, MA sent a small but fast team to Middlebury. Everyone PRed in every event they swam. At top from left to right: Ryan Davenport, Jen Schoenberg, Michael Thornton, Lynn Thornton, Edith Gardner & Asst. Coach Ellen Stanley, who set a meet record in the women's 30-34 800M free. At right are Kim Halpert, Lynn Thornton & Ellen Stanley.

Photos courtesy of Lynn Thornton



Our Canadian neighbors got in on the record-breaking act by obliterating five Canadian national records. Most impressive was 48-year old Lynn Marshall who swam three grueling races in national record time: the 400 IM in 5:33.11, the 200 IM in 2:40.38 and the 1,500 in 18:12.63, which broke her national record set at this meet last year. (Her 2008 time at Middlebury also broke her own previous record— by 17 seconds— she just keeps getting faster). To put her 1,500 record in perspective, she swam faster than the two Canadian men who set national records in the 1,500 at this meet: an 18:26.14 by Thierry Marin in the 30-34 age group and an 18:16.95 by Len Gushe in the 45-49 age group. Lynn swam *the* fastest 1,500 in the meet, and, in fact, would have had quite a race had she been swimming head to head with Michael Schmidt of Maine Masters whose time was a second slower than Lynn's at 18:13.63, but still fast enough to break the New England record.

On Saturday night, swim stroke technique revolutionary Bill Boomer regaled the crowd at the social with tales of how world-class swimmers still struggle with their body position and breathing technique, and how all of us can improve in that area, no matter what our age. At the 2010 New England Championships, there are tentative plans to have a swim technique clinic with Bill Boomer

and Middlebury College coach Peter Solomon prior to the meet—stay tuned for more information.

With more than 230 swimmers entered in the meet, individual women's high point champions were Lynn Marshall, followed by Galen Rinaldi of Connecticut, and Jessica Holmes. Twenty-six-year old Zachary Gray of Maine was the men's high point winner, followed by Daniel Rogacki of Granite State Penguins, and Son Nguyen of Maine. —**Katherine Branch, Middlebury Muffintops**

Complete meet results are available at:
<http://www.middleburymuffintops.org/LCMChamps/Default.aspx>.

Father/Son Duo Sets Standard

NEM has the second father-son duo ever to simultaneously hold Masters world records, Al Craig in the 80-84 200 LCM breaststroke with a 3:47.81, and his son, John, in the 55-59 200 SCM fly with a 2:19.72. Here is their story:

My father started swimming off the dunes on Lake Michigan as a kid. The highlight of his early career was probably his national collegiate freshman record in the 200 yard breaststroke of 2:27.8 (back in the days when the NCAA used to keep track of freshman records separately). His first Masters meet was the New England championships at Harvard in 1982, at age 54; I had to twist his arm to get him to enter. (He was a professor there, and was mortified at the thought that some of his colleagues might see him participating in such an undignified activity.) He has since become an enthusiast.

I started swimming as a ninth grader. (I've noticed that many Masters swimmers got relatively late starts as youngsters; those put in the sport by their parents by the age of nine tend to do it less.) The highlight of my early career was my national YMCA record in the 100 yard fly of 52.8, set in 1972 at age 17. (After doing that I thought I was destined for greatness, but, alas, that never happened.) I never really got very far away from the sport, and have swum Masters off and on since age 25.

Unlike the three shining stars of NEM swimming, Mike Ross, Greg Shaw, and Fred Schlicher, all of whom show utter disrespect to the records in a wide variety of events whenever they age up, my father and I each have exactly one event we're competitive at. In my father's case it's the 200 breast, in mine, it's the 200 fly. I get a kick out of the fact that because I can call myself a world record holder; non-swimming people can't tell the difference in quality between a Mike Ross and me—which is perfectly fine with me.

My father and I each hold exactly one record, but that's where the similarities between the two of us end. My father swims maybe twice a week (on a good week); I swim five or six times. He set his record in briefs; I wore a Blueseventy. I doubt he could recite the time of a single Olympic record; my head is stuffed with all sorts of useless swimming trivia going back to the 1960s. My father didn't even know that he had set his world record until two days later, when I informed him; I've been focused keenly on Greg Shaw's 55-59 200 SCM fly record for the past two years. I'll leave you to decide who has the healthy attitude towards the sport, and who is a bit, well, obsessive.

My son is continuing the family tradition; as an 11th grader this year he swam a 100 free in 48.77. My nephew Douwe Yntema, who competes for Harvard, swam a 400 IM in 3:50.33 this year. The real star of the (extended) family is his father Hess, my wife's brother, who, during a brief return to competitive swimming in his early 40s, set over 20 world and American Masters records. (My son and I are, swimming-wise, the poor country cousins.)

My father has been a member of NEM since 1982. I just joined this year, partly because my father is a member. In any case, we're both proud to belong to New England Masters, and we both count other NEMMIES among our friends. — **John Craig**

John Craig's (social commentary) blog is at: justnotsaid.blogspot.com

Adirondack Aquatics Club Masters Answer the Call

On Saturday, April 25, a merry band of six Masters swimmers, Ed Barth, Dave Bott, Tom McGill, Tom Parlon, Caren Weldon, and I travelled into Boston from the Adirondack Club in Franklin, Massachusetts to share our love of swimming with the Boston Elite Swim Team, (BEST). We answered the call for volunteers to work with this wonderful group of young, eager swimmers as asked by Charlie Skeele's article ("Boston Elite Swim Team Seeks Volunteers, Donations") published in this newsletter in March 2009. BEST, by way of one of the parents, Dawne Brown, had requested assistance from the New England Masters community to augment their volunteer coaching. BEST was preparing for the 7th Annual Black Heritage National Swim Championships meet in North Carolina taking place on Memorial Day Weekend. (We are all very excited to hear how they did!)

As our team had never done anything like this before, some of us were nervous. The group was concerned that they might not be able to teach swimming or would we be of help? (This was the last objection I thought I would receive when trying to sell this effort. How about, I do not want to give up my Saturday?) As Masters swimmers we work at our sport several times a week, many of us have swum most of our lives and yet, we worry if we can teach it? I know... I occasionally worry I might drown in the ocean or better yet forget what to do when I hit the water at a Masters meet! Do other athletes in Masters leagues work as hard as swimmers to perfect their techniques, and then worry if they can teach someone else? Fortunately, we put aside our anxieties, realizing BEST needed us, and gave it our "best" shot. Phew... Swimmers! We are a unique and wonderful group. I mean that sincerely, and that is primarily why our venture into Boston turned out so great.

We arrived at the Madison Park Community Center and Dawne greeted us with open arms. She squired us into the pool and introduced us to the kids already assembled, and as others arrived, further introductions followed. Many of the parents, including Nadine Jesionek, were present and everyone was very welcoming.

Complete results from the 7th Annual Black Heritage National Swim Championships are available online at:
<http://blackheritageswimming.org/8894.html>



Photo courtesy of Dawne Brown



Some of the BEST swimmers at the 7th Annual Black Heritage National Swim Championships held May 23 & 24 in Cary, NC. The Adirondack Masters team in Franklin helped the swimmers prepare for the meet and the kids did great there!

We knew it was going to be a good day. Dawne and I had previously arranged for our group's coaching to consist of four stroke clinics, a flip turn clinic, and Dave Bott our Masters coach to oversee starts, a long distance work-out (for the advanced swimmers), participation in the clinics, and to organize a relay. Our time with the team was roughly two hours, from 10 until noon. Each clinic rotated through five to eight swimmers every 20 minutes who had varying degrees of expertise. A total of about 30 swimmers participated. We were pleased to see the fine swimmers BEST had produced. Their supervision has been under three coaches, one present during our visit. Coach Brendon Jesionek who swam in college is a disciplinarian and the team pays close attention to his instruction. The kids were very enthused about swimming much to Brendon's efforts. We found it funny when Brendon announced to us middle aged folks, that he was now a "Masters." No kidding, we said. He is to be credited for having done a fine job and he has developed much talent with BEST.

Later over lunch, the Adirondack Masters discussed our morning with BEST and commented how impressed we were with the team. Each of us noted how willing the swimmers were to learn and how well they listened. Ed Barth, who oversaw the backstroke clinic said of the group, "I was impressed with the attentiveness and interest of the kids." He continued, "I introduced new concepts and they took in what I said and they tried it themselves." While Tom McGill, who worked on breaststroke said, "there was a wide range of talent... and the kids were willing to listen and learn."

We ended our time with BEST with a catch-up relay mixing the young swimmers and the Masters swimmers. The relay was a terrific way to end the day. It was fun-filled yet it displayed teamwork and taught the kids the skill of when to go off the blocks. Many



had never done a relay before, so it provided a good introduction. I am sure BEST experienced tougher relays during their meet in North Carolina, but ours was a good way for them to become familiar. For the parents and visitors in the stands, the relay was a raucous time. The pool exploded with yelps and screams as the two teams tried to catch one another. A cat and mouse game ensued and the lead changed several times before a seasoned teenager finally caught the opposing side. With our time ended, we changed and gathered in the lobby to share coffee, juice, bagels, and great conversation about our sport. I would encourage other Masters groups to pick up where we left off and go in to Boston and help develop these kids further. The parents, coaches, and volunteers would appreciate additional help. They have done their homework in seeking out grants and petitioning the City of Boston for pool time and equipment, but they need to partner further with other Masters teams. We enjoyed our day and hope to repeat it in the future. Thanks, Charlie, for putting the word out. The Adirondack Aquatics Masters team had a great experience, and we are no longer nervous!— **Patricia Saint Aubin, Adirondack Aquatic Club**

On Swimming in the Charles River

I am not an open-water swimmer. I love chlorine, tiles, lines, order. But for some reason (perhaps because I have capsized so many times in the Charles River Basin while sailing at Community Boating), I felt like challenging myself to dive into the Charles River and celebrate its swimmability last June 15 in the second one-mile race organized by the Charles River Swimming Club. I have always been impressed by Governor Weld's 1996 leap into the Charles in his business suit to demonstrate his administration's commitment to making the river swimmable again. If he could jump in before significant cleanup, surely I could, too, now that the river was at a B+ rating for cleanliness.

So I went for it. I borrowed a wetsuit (very uncool— most people in this race don't wear wetsuits), and I tried out my open-water skills the week before at Walden Pond. Though it was mid-June, it still seemed chilly to me, but Walden Pond was magical. I'm sure everyone who loves outdoor swimming knows this, but I don't, since I generally panic in open water. I calmed myself at Walden by focusing on the light shafts slanting through the emerald-green water, very peaceful.

Upcoming Meets

7/10-7/12 - New England Bay State Games (*sanctioned)

2009 Bay State Games will be held July 10-12 at Harvard's Blodgett Pool. The information form can be downloaded here: www.swimnem.org/entryforms/Masters+Swimming+Promo+Flyer.pdf. Registration now open.

7/19 - Great Bay Masters LCM Meet (*sanctioned)

Great Bay Masters Swim Meet to be held at the Jenny Thompson Pool in Dover NH on Sunday July 19 2008. Check-in 7:30 to 8:30 a.m. Warm-up 8 a.m. to 8:55 a.m. Meet starts at 9 a.m. Meet director: Ed Gendreau, egendreau@comcast.net. Meet web page: www.greatbaymasters.org/gbmmeets.php

Charles Swim Sunday came quickly. It was overcast, and had it started pouring rain before the race began, we likely would not have been allowed to get in (there still are pesky problems with sewage/water drain overflow into the Charles when it rains).

I knew in my head that the Charles was swimmable, but I also knew from sailing that lots of “things” float around on top of it, like, oh, lemon rinds, the occasional tampon, plastic wrappers. I told myself not to think (based on my sailing capsizes) that the water of the Charles reminded me of spit-out tobacco juice (I’m from the South), very different from the previous week’s emerald Oz of Walden.

So I didn’t think of any of these things. Everyone was excited to swim. It was inordinately early for me (get there by 7 am! I like to swim in a pool at night and sleep late on Sundays); thus I was both mostly unconscious and swept up into everyone else’s happy anticipation. I leapt in and began my first open-water race, with all the necessary feet, elbows, and enthusiastic kicks into my face. As a clump we took off for the Mass. Ave. Bridge and buoy #1. It seemed awfully far, but there were plenty of people around me. It was about at buoy #1 that it started to pour rain, but I didn’t think about that, I just kept swimming. I felt brave and powerful.

By buoy #2 we were more or less in single file; there were some little waves; and I was alone but could see a few people ahead of me and kept following them. And then somehow, suddenly, I was finished. For the rest of the day I couldn’t believe I had been so brave.

It is true that later that night I started thinking about all of the Charles River water I had swallowed as I swam (it’s inevitable, I think), and the rain, and what I might have been drinking, which caused me to dash up to Store 24 and buy ginger ale and crackers, but that thought and feeling abated after a few days.

What stayed with me is that I did it. I really like to tell people I swam a mile in the Charles. I like to point out the course: the Hatch Shell dock to the Mass. Ave. Bridge to the “Salt and Pepper Bridge” and then back to the dock. A lot of people don’t believe me. The Charles? You swam in the Charles? The once-fiery Charles? Did you get any shots beforehand? I say yes, yes, yes, and no. I—lover of tiles, chlorine, confinement, control—leapt away from myself for that mile, for a little more than 28 minutes, and celebrated the hard work of all who have made the Charles swimmable. I celebrated as well the hope that this hard work represents for other cleanup projects. Plus, I won first place in the wetsuit category for women age 40+ (there were only three of us), which got me a beautiful stained-glass medal and a certificate for a free day of kayaking or canoeing from Charles River Canoe and Kayak. — **Emily White, MIT Masters**

Editor’s note: We had planned to run Emily’s piece alongside results from the 2009 Charles River 1-mile race, but alas, the race was cancelled this year due to rain. According to the Charles River Swimming Club web site, www.charlesriverswimmingclub.org, the race had attracted 150 swimmers in its third year and was to be the largest Charles River swim to-date. The rain cancellation was a “cautious move,” as runoff can pose a health hazard to swimmers. The club expects to hold the race again in 2010, conditions permitting.

ABC Gray Sharks Conquer the Chesapeake Bay Swim

Sunday, June 14th, three members of the ABC Gray Sharks; Kirsten Thompson, Steve Belletete, and Mike Bolio participated in the Chesapeake Bay swim. The swim is a fundraiser for the March of Dimes and covers the distance of the bay, 4.4 miles, in the stretch of water between the east and west bridge commutes of the Chesapeake Bay Bridge. Just 600 swimmers are chosen from a lottery pool to participate. The Bay Bridge was opened to automobile travel July 30th, 1952—prior to that folks traveling from the eastern and western shores took a 40-minute ferry ride to cross the watery expanse. If I haven’t impressed you yet, let me tell you the how long it took by arms and legs alone for the number one male and female to cross the sometimes-choppy Chesapeake Bay. The number one male, Brian Benda, 38, finished in 1 hour, 34 minutes and the number one female, Erin Luley 20, finished in 1:42. Only about an hour and a half by man/woman power. Quite impressive!



ABC Gray Sharks at the 4.4 mile Chesapeake Bay Bridge Swim, 2009. Left to right: Steve Belletete, Coach Kim Donovan, Kirsten Thompson showing off some hardware she picked up between the two shorelines, and Mike Bolio.

Training for the swim was just a piece of the swim. The pre-race challenge was to get enough yardage in while keeping the shoulders happy and healthy. During the peak training week, the Sharks swam close to 20,000 yards, with the longest yardage for one day being 9,000 yards. They did a few open water swims across Walden Pond X2 covering a distance of about two miles. The Sharks were concerned about the wetsuit chafing they endured from sighting in their pre-Bay Bridge open water swims. In the end, this was a moot point; all lubed up with Pam and Body Glide they merely had to maintain position between the bridges by watching their comrades and the bridge supports.

As was experienced by the Sharks and other swimmers, the biggest challenge during the swim was managing the tide. The beginning of the race had the current flowing in one direction and, as the swimmers progressed, the other. In order for the swimmers to stay in the race they had to complete each mile by a specified time. The first mile allowed for 1.5 hours, and each one following was 45 minutes. There were two waves. The slower swimmers left in the first wave, and the faster in the second.

Kirsten, like many other swimmers, said she often felt like she was swimming sideways. Going into the race, the Sharks were not sure whether or not they would require the services of the food and water boats. None of them used the boat, deciding it was completely doable to finish the race without interrupting their pace.

The 2nd and 3rd miles were most choppy and probably proved to be the area where 100 out of the 600 swimmers were plucked out of the water— either for going out of bounds or not making a cut-off time. The Sharks went at those couple of miles in their own ways. Kirsten enjoyed her journey with a private sing-along to Lionel Richie’s “All Night Long,” occasionally bumping into a neighboring swimmer. Steve settled into a pace thinking he must have passed the 2-mile marker and be well on his way into mile 3, looked up to find the buoy marking mile number 2, then perked up happy to realize he was already half way! Mike relied on his strong legs to get him through the last mile! Each and every one of the Sharks stayed within the time requirements and arduously attempted to stay on course so as not to be DQ’ed.

As their coach, I place a lot of value on the coolheaded ABC Gray Shark swimmers. They allowed the flow to take them where it may but maintained their boundaries. They fed off the beat of the other swimmers and didn’t allow themselves to get flustered by the crowd. In fact, they felt like they were friends with the other swimmers and reveled in the camaraderie! Kirsten, Steve, and Mike will be aptly prepared for future open water swims.

Kirsten Thompson placed 3rd in her age group with a time of 1:56:46. Steve Belletete placed 24th in his age group with a time of 2:13:21. Michael Bolio placed 54th in his age group with a time of 2:45:47 — **Kim Donovan, ABC Gray Sharks**

Pool Workout Corner

Thinking about doing an open water swim later this summer, but still stuck training in a pool? Here’s a long-distance workout that can help you prepare for a **big** swim.

Warmup **1,000 yards**
 600 swim - easy
 200 stroke - work in some drill
 200 kick - moderate pace, start elevating the heart rate

Main Set **8,900 yards**
 4 X 2,000
 #1 straight swim at 75% to 80% effort, stay long and strong
 #2 4X500 odds pace work (holding your target pace), evens pull on :30 rest
 #3 400 swim, 50 drill, 50 kick (4x) on 1:00 rest
 #4 10X200 at 85% effort on :30 rest

6 X 100 on 2:00
 Odds 50 drill, 50 swim
 Evens 50 K, 50 swim

6 X 50 IM order, no free
 1st 3- K/D on 1:20
 2nd 3- swim on 1:10

Easy **cool down** for *at least* 100 yards. **100 yards**
Total: 10,000 yards

On long training swims like this, focus on clean, consistent technique and maintaining a smooth, steady pace on the longer pieces.

2009 Manhattan Island Marathon Swim Recap

On the morning of June 6th, 2009, a hearty group of 25 solo swimmers and nine relay teams set out to circumnavigate Manhattan Island. The swim covered 28.5 scenic miles around the world’s most famous island, and involved three rivers of varying levels of cleanliness and turbulence. Among the group of swimmers were two New England Masters swimmers, NEM Newsletter Editor Elaine Howley as a solo entrant, and USMS National Administrator, Tracy Grilli as a member of the 6-person relay team, “The Mighty Mermaids.”

The swim began at South Cove in Battery Park City at the southern end of the long, slender island and wound counter-clockwise up the East River (no, there were no Kramer or dead body sightings, just a fast current and a really cool trip under the Brooklyn Bridge), up into the Harlem River (which has slower moving water and more detritus floating in it) and finally turned at the very top of the Island into the massive, fast-flowing, and windy Hudson River.

Here are two photos from the event submitted by Cheryl Kupan of Maine Masters, who greeted the swimmers at the finish line to document all the crazy tanlines. Full results and more information about this and other open water events hosted by NYC Swim are available here:

www.nycswim.org

It was an amazing 8½ hour journey for me, that marked the second of three major swims I’ve undertaken to complete the “Triple Crown” of open water marathon swimming.

(Manhattan, along with the Catalina Channel, which I successfully crossed in September 2008, and the English Channel, which I am scheduled to attempt in August, make up this dynamic trio of cold water

marathon swims.) If you’d like to learn more about this adventure, my Catalina swim, or my impending Channel crossing, please visit my blog at:

<http://blog.talesofthebeerbaby.com> — Elaine K. Howley



At top, Elaine Howley lived to regret those goggle and cap tanlines. Below, the Mighty Mermaids and David Grilli, at the awards dinner after the race. The Mermaids are Nacy Steadman Martin, Tracy Grilli, Lisa Bennett, Christie Ciraulo, Jenny Cook, Karen Farnsworth-Einsidler, Jacki Hirsty, and Barbara McGregor.

Doubling Down

Life is full of choices. Some are big. Some are forced upon us. Some are seemingly inconsequential. But in the final reckoning, every choice we make, no matter how small, ultimately makes us who we are and determines where we end up.

For one Rhode Island swimmer, the big choices have been made already, and it's now down to decisions about the little details that will determine whether he will become the first Rhode Island resident to ever swim the English Channel.

In a gutsy move, Ray Gandy, 47, of Coventry, Rhode Island, has opted to bypass the typical route for swimming the English Channel; just swimming one direction across the 22-mile stretch of cold, rough water that has been dubbed the "Mount Everest of Swimming" is not challenge enough for the 12-time Division II All American and USMS record holder. Instead, Gandy has thrown his hat in the ring to become one of only 18 people worldwide to make the swim a round trip.

Gandy's decision to head right for a double crossing is the result of a combination of factors. "I don't see myself gearing up multiple times for the Channel. Once is enough for me. It's also extraordinarily expensive and I don't think I can gear up another \$8,000 to \$10,000 in a year or two when I might be ready to go back and try again."

In addition to the practical concerns regarding the level of training he'd have to maintain and the cost involved, Gandy also felt that if he were to sign up for just a single crossing, he might get across and feel some sense of "anti-climax, like I could have done more. I don't want to finish and find out that it wasn't even as long as a training swim I've done. Looking realistically into the future, I'm doing this once, and I want to take full advantage and go at it as a realistic, yet extreme challenge. I'm not 100% sure I can do the double, but I think when I get in and get going, it'll be down to the conditions."

The Course

Gandy is planning to swim from Dover, England to the French coast somewhere near Calais and back again in a marathon of endurance and mental toughness that will see him spending between 20 and 24 hours or more in the chilly 60 degree waters. The Channel is one of the world's busiest shipping lanes, so traffic is also a concern. Gandy is not sure what his exact course will look like when he leaves Dover Harbor, but most swimmers chart an "S" pattern as they cross currents and tides. Most swimmers end up covering upwards of 30 miles in a one-way trip, so Gandy could be swimming nearly 60 miles.

Gandy also does not know the exact date or time when his crossing will begin. He will wait for the pilot to find a suitable window of swimmable weather, which may never happen. It's all up to Mother Nature.

"My biggest concern is just getting the chance to go," Gandy says of the nerve-wracking wait he and his crew will endure prior to starting the swim.



Gandy was first to the finishline of the 2007 10K Champion's Challenge race on Johnson's Pond in Coventry, Rhode Island.

With all this uncertainty, Gandy is taking a big risk both physically and financially. The fees alone to have the swim observed and ratified were about \$400. The cost to hire the pilot for a double crossing was about

\$7,000. Add in the flight, accommodations, and all the incidentals associated with travel, and you've got a very expensive event that requires participants to be betting men and women, willing to roll the dice on themselves and the conditions—always a dicey proposition at best, especially when you consider that England is not known for nice weather.

During the swim, Gandy will be escorted by an experienced pilot, Neil Streeter, the brother of Allison Streeter, the undisputed "Queen of the Channel," with an unbelievable 43 crossings under her belt. Seeing as Gandy plans on taking one shot at this, he wanted to be sure he had the best pilot and access to the vast body of Channel swimming knowledge that the Streeter family possesses.

Also on board the boat, will be Gandy's father-in-law, who crewed for him in Tampa Bay, a friend who crewed for him in Lake George, and his daughter, Jessica, a sophomore at Brown University, on her first excursion into the world of crewing a Channel swimmer. Gandy says that Jessica should be a big help and morale booster, and her recently-acquired life-saving skills learned in an EMT course are an extra safety measure he hopes not to have to use.

Gandy will pause to eat every hour for the first few hours of the swim, and then partway through will drop the feeding interval to every 45 minutes. He will try to keep his feed stops to less than 60 seconds so that he won't get cold and won't lose ground. "We set the schedule openly with the crew, and we'll base the next feed time on how I'm feeling." He will eat and drink a combination of things, including Perpetuem (a carbohydrate replacement product made by Hammer) and canned peaches, granola bars, bananas, and other semi-solid foods that won't be hard to chew but that will "give different flavors to my mouth instead of just a drink."

The Training

It might seem that with such a large task at hand, perhaps Gandy is a man of leisure with time to spare on long swims. But that's not

the case. Gandy commutes an hour and a half each way to work as Chief Information Officer at UTC Power, which means that during the week, he has limited time to spend swimming. He typically squeezes in an hour or so every morning. This also means that to be ready for such an enormous challenge, Gandy must dedicate his weekends to longer swims in the pool, lake, or ocean.

Gandy cites a recent 12 hour swim he did in Johnson's Pond in Coventry as a "huge training breakthrough that's going to translate well to the Channel." In that session, Gandy said he tried some new nutrition management techniques and has solidified his plan for what he will eat and drink and when in the Channel. "I felt decent for 12 hours. I was engaged, with a sense of purpose, and I felt like during the swim, I properly managed my pain and nutrition."

The Machine

Gandy says that he constantly thinks about his body position and technique while he's swimming. Efficiency and conserving energy are his primary concerns during a swim like this, and he says he consciously thinks about "energy management. I have to use energy to stay warm and move forward, but I don't want to use too much to get injured or run out of steam. When conditions are good, I try to maintain a smooth, efficient stroke. Whether I'm successful or not will likely come down to running out of energy and getting hypothermic," he says.

While focusing on technique is his primary concern, Gandy says he also thinks about his family, work, sings songs in his head, and thinks about what the crew is going to give him to eat at the next feed stop. "Every now and again, I might be comfortable and think about other things. But the underlying focus is on the task at hand."

When the going gets tough, as it most certainly will, Gandy says he's prepared some questions to ask himself. "When I start to get exhausted or depressed, I'll ask myself if I'm injured. If I'm not injured, then am I just tired? If I'm just tired, then why? Have I taken in too few calories?, etc. It's an analysis of the machine, and I'll be assessing whether we are operating as optimally as we can."

The Cause

It's not often that this reporter gets chills by listening to someone's story, but that's exactly what happened when Gandy began telling me about why he's doing this swim and the charity that he's raising money for, the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society of Rhode Island.

In 1992, Gandy's wife Donna was diagnosed with Chronic Myelogenous Leukemia (CML), a rare form of blood cancer, and was told that she had four to six years to live. "She was 28-years old and had a two-year old daughter. The doctors gave her a 38% chance of survival if she opted for a bone marrow transplant." The transplant offered some hope with much risk, but the option of doing nothing was just as grim. Gandy says it was a difficult "Sophie's Choice" type of situation. But she never flinched. She opted for the transplant and the 38% survival rate."

The transplant took place in the early summer of 1993 and included three weeks of intensive chemotherapy and radiation followed by the surgery itself. Gandy took the summer off from work and split

his time between caring for his young daughter and spending time with Donna in the hospital. "It was sad. There were five rooms [in the cancer wing] and we'd see the rooms going empty [as some patients didn't recover]."

Gandy says that over the next several months, Donna had a difficult road to recovery with many ups and downs along the way. "Several times there were issues and close calls, but over time, those became fewer and further between. She's been able to see her daughter grow up to do tremendous things."



"I'm doing this once, and I want to take full advantage and go at it as a realistic, yet extreme challenge," Gandy says.

Photos courtesy of Ray Gandy.

The Journey

Gandy says that the journey to the channel will likely outweigh the actual event after it's all over. He says he has connected with a worldwide network of similarly-minded Channel swimmers and sup-

porters who have made the whole process easier and worthwhile. "It's something new that I've never been exposed to, and the information is intriguing. To learn about your body and these extreme events has been amazing. I grew up swimming, but this is a very different type of swimming and group of people."

"I've learned a lot about myself. In the beginning, it was about a dream and a personal challenge. It was just a pipe dream years ago, but has become a focused reality. As much as I'm a competitive person and I will be giving it my all on that day, regardless of the outcome, the journey is becoming its own reward."

Gandy notes that there are some small parallels between the choices his wife made and his own decision to swim a double. "Donna had a difficult choice. Her choices were forced upon her, and her decisions have made her and many other people who they are as a result." Gandy hopes that his own gamble in regards to his Channel swim will produce positive results as well, if on a less high-stakes plane, and take him not just to the French shore and back, but to many other places in the future. "I want to raise lot of money, but whatever I manage will be a springboard for things in my future. I've already raised \$1,200, which has gone straight to the Society as the result of my efforts, and I know it will be more. It's the first step towards things to come. It's the beginning of another journey in my life."

Even a journey of 80,000 long strokes in uncertain waters starts with that first leap of faith off the boat.— **Elaine K. Howley**, *NEM News Editor*

For more information about Ray Gandy's upcoming double crossing of the English Channel and details on how you can contribute to the cause, please visit: www.rayswims.com

In Memoriam, Dr. Donald A. Read

July 19, 1934 – May 27, 2009

Donald Algott Read, Professor Emeritus of Health Sciences from Worcester State College, passed away at the age of 75. He was a lifelong swimmer, a talented artist, having completed a course of Commercial Art at Vesper George School of Art, and a genuine free spirit. Dr. Read authored and co-authored more than twenty books in the field of health education for teaching the subject to college-aged students.

Born in Pawtucket, Rhode Island, he was the second son of Florence A. Read and Max W. Read. His father, Director of Athletics for the City of Pawtucket, instilled a passion for athletics with a focus on swimming. He was an All-American high school freestyle swimmer at Pawtucket East High School, ranked first in the country in the 50 and 100 yard freestyle in 1952 and 1953, Southeastern Conference champion in 1954, 1955, and 1956 at the University of Florida, Rocky Mountain champion in the 50 and 100 yard freestyle for the University of Northern Colorado at Greeley, an alternate for the 50 yard freestyle on the 1956 US Olympic Team, and later in life, the National Long Course Masters champion in the 50 freestyle, holding the title of fastest swimmer in the world over 50 years old. Dr. Read was inducted to the Rhode Island Aquatic Hall of Fame in 1989, joining his father in the Hall and becoming the only father-son inductees.

Athletic scholarships opened academic doors to his undergraduate studies at Florida State University, and Colorado State University. Dr. Read received his Masters of Education from University of

Maryland and his PhD at Boston University before joining the teaching faculty at the School of Public Health, University of Massachusetts at Amherst, in 1967. In 1979 he joined Worcester State College and established its Department of Health Sciences.

As Co-Chair of the National Society of Public Health Educators he helped direct the committee toward three goals into the 21st Century: to increase awareness of the importance of ethics to all aspects of the professional and personal lives of public health educators; to encourage public health education practitioners to reflect carefully on the ethical issues pertinent to their teaching and research; and to encourage the practice of ethical behavior in all professional and personal interactions.

He leaves his mother, Florence A. Read (age 97) of Hadley, Massachusetts, his uncle, Robert Carlson of Pennsylvania (age 81), his daughter Robin and grandson Max, both of Amherst, his son Craig, daughter-in-law Ashley, and Grandchildren Sedona and Jack, of Seattle, Washington, and his nephew Kevin Read of Pawtucket, Rhode Island, and his former wife Sue Butterfield Hagberg of South Hadley, Massachusetts.

His drive for spontaneity, love for family, and passion for swimming and his Harley Davidson will remain in the hearts and minds of those he leaves behind. If you need him, and do not see him, whisper his name into your heart and he will be there. Until then, live your life to its fullest. A private ceremony was attended by his family in Gloucester, Massachusetts. In lieu of flowers, the family suggests making a donation to your local YMCA/YWCA.



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NEM News: The New England Masters Swim Club Inc., Newsletter
Elaine Kornbau Howley, Editor
E-mail: nemnews@gmail.com
Visit us online at: www.swimnem.org
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Contributors: Emily White, Patricia Saint Aubin, Kathleen Branch, Dawne Brown, Bill Johnston, Lynn Thornton, Tracy Grilli, Amy V. Sexsmith, John Craig, Ray Gandy, Cheryl Kupan & Kim Donovan

Elaine Howley
28 Adams Street
Waltham, MA 02453