



Aqua Master

Award-winning newsletter of Oregon Masters Swimming

"Swimming for Life"

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USMS 2021 SCY Nationals

by Dave Hathaway

Oregon Masters competed in the Nationals held in Greensboro Aquatic Center, also known as the GAC. The meet took place from July 21 to July 25. This year's Oregon team was small compared to prior years' teams. Each of the four swimmers who were able to make the cross country journey found the event to be extremely worthwhile.

The GAC complex is composed of two 50 meter pools and a dive well that provided swimmers an excellent opportunity to warm up and down during the swim meet. The meet host provided a safe and secure COVID compliant atmosphere.

Our Oregon Masters Team raced to 9th place in the Overall Regional Team category and the Women's Team placed an impressive 4th place finish with only 3 members. Along the way the team picked up eleven National Champion Titles, one Northwest Zone Record and four State Records.

The list of OMS National Champion winners & new record holders are as follows:

Alexis Higlett snapped up four Titles in the women's 35-39 category in the 1650, 50 back, 100 back and the 400 IM.

Valerie Jenkins competed in the women's 55-59 age group and won Titles in the 50 back, 100 back, 100 free and 50 fly. Valerie also notched out a new Zone & State record in her 50 back swim.

Christine McClafferty made her mark in the women's 45-49 category taking Titles in the 200 fly, 200 IM and the 400 IM

David Hathaway competed in the men's 60-64 age group picking up three new State records in the 500 & 1000 free & 400 IM.

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David Hathaway & Christine McClafferty. This picture was taken at the GAC right after Christine picked up her metals

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Off the Block

Since this column is called "Off the Block", whatever information is deemed of interest, by the editor, is presented

Bob & Fran: How a Plant-Based Diet Saved Our Lives – Literally

We are both in our 80s and (are) all about healthy aging with a whole-food plant-based lifestyle! We want to share our personal stories on how we both overcame life-threatening illnesses and went on to lead very healthy, happy and long lives!

Here is Fran's story ...

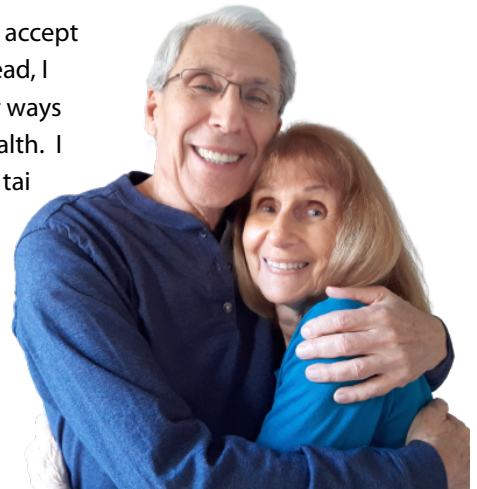
After returning home from a trip to China in the Fall of 1992, I started feeling some minor muscular changes but didn't think too much of it. Then, one day, I woke up and couldn't open one eye.

I went to my doctor who took one look at me and said he thought I had Bell's Palsy. I then said to him, 'No, I think it's Myasthenia Gravis.' I don't know why I said that since MG is a very rare neuromuscular disease that even most doctors don't know much about. He sent me to a neurologist who did a simple test and confirmed that my diagnosis was correct!

I was told that MG was incurable, I would have to be on medication for the rest of my life, and that my life expectancy would be shortened. In other words, my situation was hopeless!

I was prescribed several heavy-duty drugs including prednisone and was told there wasn't much else that could be done. I suffered from severe double vision, had difficulty with my speech and swallowing and, at times, was so weak that I couldn't hold my head up.

I chose not to accept that 'verdict.' Instead, I kept searching for ways to improve my health. I started practicing tai chi and qigong. I walked several miles each day. I tried to eat healthier (white meat chicken, turkey, and fish); although, at the time, I didn't know



much about what was and wasn't healthy! I was very sick at times and even wound up in ICU for 5 days because of bad advice from an 'internationally-known' neurologist!

During my illness, I continued to search for some hope for a cure and wound up seeing 11 different neurologists! They all said just about the same thing as the first one. Not one suggested a change in lifestyle, including diet, as a possible remedy.

Then, in 2006, I heard a clinical nutritionist speak. He explained that eating animal products compromise the immune system and recommended patients with MG or any autoimmune disease switch to a whole-food plant-based diet. I immediately did so and in just a few months I was off all medications and no longer had any symptoms of this dreaded disease!

It is now 14 years later and I feel safe in saying that I no longer have this 'incurable' disease! I am very thankful.

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Fit to Swim

Coach Colette Crabbe
OMS Fitness Chair



What Life Lessons Have I Learned From Swimming?

I have been swimming since I was about ten years old which, compared to most, is relatively late. It started by an almost drowning incident at the age of seven in a backyard small private pool. If it were not for the quick thinking and action of my friend's mom, I would not be here today.

So the first lesson I learned is **EVERYBODY NEEDS TO LEARN HOW TO SWIM, JUST FOR SAFETY**. Whatever your age, learn how to swim. US Master Swimming has a program called *Adult Learn to Swim*, and I am sure your local pool is offering extensive swim lessons programs, certainly for children, but very often also intended for adults. Teach your kids how to be safe around water at a young age, help your adult friends, including the older generations, find the resources to be safe.

After learning how to swim, which I can tell you was not easy for me, especially putting my head underwater, I quickly joined a local swim team. The second lesson I learned is **PROGRESSION IN SWIMMING IS SLOW AND CHALLENGING**. As in many sports, mastering the technical aspects is a lifelong process, but is the key to improvement. The pros are constantly working on their strokes and experimenting with their technique to push the limit of their efficiency in the water. Everybody should do the same.

Being in a swim team might sometimes be intimidating and frustrating. Some of your teammates who are doing the same workouts days after days might be so much faster. The third lesson I learned is **SWIMMING IS AN INDIVIDUAL SPORT**. Although we swim together and are friends, we are only competing against ourselves. Measure where you are

now and improve upon it. If you have done your best time or increased your distance or learned a new stroke or how to do a flip turn, you are progressing and improving. Set small goals based on your current level. You cannot control what the swimmer in the other lane is doing and it does not matter. I have lost a lot of races where I was so happy because it was my best performance, and I have won a lot of races with subpar swims.

Once you become a competitive swimmer, the workouts become tough, long and often boring. The expectations are high. The fourth lesson I learned as a teen competitive swimmer is **YOU NEED GRIT, MENTAL TOUGHNESS, STRONG MOTIVATION AND BIG ORGANIZATION AND TIME MANAGEMENT SKILLS**. Those skills will be invaluable to you later in life, but as a teen you do not perceive them that way. At that time, your teammates and your friends are your best support groups.

After a long break, getting married and having my own family, I returned to swimming for the sheer pleasure of being in the water, and discovered Masters Swimming. The fifth lesson I learned is **MASTER SWIMMERS ARE JUST SWIMMING FOR PLEASURE AND THE GOOD FEELING IT GIVES THEM**. The community of Master Swimming is incredibly supportive, without the focus being on performance. Whatever your level, you are accepted in the group. Most of us are successful professionals ready to help each other. Performing at a particular swim meet is no more the major focus. Family and friends are more important. We just want to be happy, healthy, and fit. Aging, a health issue, an injury will slowly put a toll on our performances, but we must accept it and listen to our body.

Keep on swimming and enjoy the Masters Swimming community.





Coaches Chair

Coach Kevin Cleary
OMS Coaches Chair

As things start to (slowly...I hope) return to normal, and more and more folks return to the pool, here are some thoughts as you approach whatever endeavor you choose to indulge in!

Spending the first few weeks focusing on technique and gradually building up the intensity will pay off immensely. When the time comes to ramp things up into the full swing of training, your diligence and attention to detail will pay off, with some stellar results in practice, not to mention a couple of solid meets under your belt.

While it's not unheard of for athletes to be hitting a best time or two a few weeks into the season after a long break, it really shouldn't be greatly expected (especially as we get older).

However, whether or not you had fantastic results to kick off the season, you shouldn't let your success (or perceived lack thereof) go to your head.

Both success and failure can be equally damaging, but also equally valuable.

A principle that I try to live by (and not always successfully) is the idea that one never loses: either you win, or you learn. Either way, the outcome should be viewed as positive. Now is the perfect time to start developing that mentality.

Suppose your performances have been better than you ever imagined. Let's say that you are firing on all cylinders during training. You're feeling great about your return to the water.

That's certainly something to be proud of, and should give you cause for hope and excitement, and bodes well for

the rest of the season.

But have a care, as early success is often a double-edged sword. If you're not careful, that success can and will go to your head, inflating your ego past what it should be and setting you up for eventual disappointment, because progress and improvement are NOT linear.

Training and competition do not work that way. At some point, you will hit snags and plateaus, even if it's not right away, and the higher you've climbed, the farther and harder your eventual fall will be.

Allow me to use myself as an example.

I hit best times every single race of my sophomore high school swim season. I was training like a madman and seeing immediate and constant results.

Great, right?

At first, it was awesome! I kept working hard and reaping the benefits. Better still, my coaches and teammates noticed, and I was honored for it many times before we wrapped up the season. In fact, I was inspired to take up club swimming that summer, in the hopes of continuing my success.

All that I needed to do was put in the effort, and I'd take off like a rocket.

...until that didn't happen.

It had gotten to the point that I expected a PR every time I dove into the

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Long Distance Swimming

Coach Bob Bruce
Long Distance Chair



Oregon LMSC 5-km & 10-km Postal Swim Results

2021

Place numbers are national places
OR = Oregon Record; NR = National Record
* = Oregon All-Time Top Twelve Time

Oregon LMSC 5-km Postal Swim Results

Women 35-39

Pl	Name	Age	Team	Time	Pts
1	Higlett, Alexis	38	MACO	1:12:01.17*	881

Women 45-49

3	Criscione, Anicia	48	CAT	1:19:13.56*	813
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Women 50-54

5	Morgen, Cheryl	52	COMA	1:26:04.99*	761
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Women 60-64

1	Hanson, Betsy	60	COMA	1:24:10.09*	829
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Women 65-69

6	Summers, Jeanna	67	ORM	1:41:11.15	751
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Men 55-59

Pl	Name	Age	Team	Time	Pts
5	McNamara, Tank	58	COMA	1:34:58.88	667

Men 60-64

4	Allender, Pat	62	CAT	1:17:54.20*	821
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Men 70-74

1	Bruce, Bob	73	COMA	1:21:36.72	895
3	Carew, Mike	71	COMA	1:53:52.99*	641

Women's 35+: 3 x 5000

1	OREG (Hanson, Criscione, Higlett)	3:55:24.82
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Men's 55+: 3 x 5000

2	OREG (Carew, McNamara, Bruce)	4:14:29.80
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Mixed 35+: 4 x 5000

1	OREG (Criscione, Higlett, Bruce, Allender)	5:10:45.65
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Combined National Club Scores:

1	Swim Kentucky	13 swimmers	8650 pts
2	Palm Beach Masters	11 swimmers	7844 pts
3	Oregon	9 swimmers	7059 pts

Oregon LMSC 10-km Postal Swim Results

Women 65-69

Pl	Name	Age	Team	Time	Pts
3	Summers, Jeanna	67	ORM	3:31:55.63	728

Combined National Club Scores:

1	Palm Beach Masters	7 swimmers	5100 pts
14	Oregon	1 swimmer	728 pts

A note about club scoring: Club point scoring is calculated based on Quality Points, which is the ratio of each individual time to the current USMS Record for the gender & age group and expressed as the three-digit number that you see following each individual time in the results. The faster the swim the more Quality Points a swimmer earned. Club totals are the sum of the quality points of its swimmers. Since every swimmer receives quality points, every swimmer counts!

ePostal National Championships

Who's ready to go l-o-o-ong this fall? The 2021 USMS 3000/6000-Yard ePostal National Championships are underway now. As we revamp the ePostals, please note that swimmers now need to register prior to swimming the event between Sept. 15-Nov. 15. Once you've registered and completed the swim(s), results can be submitted though the athlete roster.



Swimmer Spotlight

—submitted by Arlene Delmage

Name: Jessica Stacy
Age: 32
Local Team: MAC – Multnomah Athletic Club
Occupation: Creative Director, Self-Employed

My relationship with water — and eventually, swimming in it — has been fluid throughout the years. It began as a hate more than a love kind of relationship. I grew up in San Antonio, Texas, where I started swim lessons at 4 years old. I bit my swim instructor so I could get out of the lesson without having to go to the deep end. At a ranch where I grew up, I would yelp if the lake grass grazed my toes — worried there were slimy creatures lurking beneath. Yet I was more than happy to run to the edge of a 5 meter platform and leap 10 times my height for the epic splash landing that awaited below. I can't explain it — except that I always came back to the water, whether I was ready to dive in or not.

In 1996 my family reluctantly moved to the Bay Area to follow my dad's job. However, this became a catalyst for trying new things — including taking advantage of the sunny California summer at the local YMCA pool. My sister and I joined the Orcas, a recreational swim team where practices showed me I could kick faster than everyone, even the older kids in my sister's lane. My coaches accidentally entered me into the 9-10 age group in my very first meet (I was always taller than kids my own age) instead of swimming in the 6&Under category. While my first race revealed backstroke as my nemesis, as I ping-ponged against the lane lines up and down the pool, I got a taste for competition that, as it turns out, I never let go. (Just like I still despise backstroke.)

Each summer, I kept coming back to the pool. Soon swimming became my favorite — and only — sport when I joined the Dolphins Swim Team in Pleasant Hill, CA. Not that it was always fun or easy. I was nine years old, terribly shy, and awkwardly tall. It was hard to fit in; I left my first practice crying because a girl asked me if I was held back in school because “your feet are SO big.” I was the slowest in my age group and thought I wasn't fast enough to go to the County meet at the end of the season. My coach had to call me at home saying, “Get to practice — you did qualify and we need you on a relay!”

A year later I was the fastest 10 year old on the team. I broke every record in my age group and won meets across

the ultra-competitive Contra Costa County. I had found my “thing,” and myself—shedding my shyness in the process. At 11 I joined the Terrapins Swim Team, a premier Gold Medal USA swim club and the home of Natalie Coughlin, and I went straight back to being the slowest on the team. I cried when I couldn't

complete 16x50s on 50 seconds, thinking I would never be good enough to hang with the faster kids. Like clockwork, a year later I became the fastest 12-year-old 200 LCM breaststroker in the country — breaking the 11-12 national age group record for a whole eight hours before getting disqualified in the Far Westerns finals due to suspicion my elbows were coming out above the water. In the following months I reeled from this while adjusting to puberty and contracting whooping cough that took me out of the pool for months. Just when I was getting used to my new 5'8" frame and getting my stroke back, my family moved once again — this time to the PNW.

I learned early on that swimming, like life, ebbs and flows. The following years would take me to different teams from MAC to Mount Hood to Skyview High School—where I only competed my freshman and senior seasons, due to Washington rules that you can't swim with your club team during the high school season. I tried to find my feel for the water again. My best strokes would flip flop, depending on whatever my latest injury allowed me to train at the time. It was hard to have tasted success so early on and not swim up to my potential, but it also taught me there was more to life than swimming. There were friends, school, and goals that I didn't have to let go — like earning a Division 1 College scholarship. Even while battling mononucleosis at State my senior year, I swam well enough to ink a partial scholarship to the University of Hawai'i at Manoa, in Honolulu, HI.



2016 USMS Nationals after her 100-m butterfly championship win.

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Keeping Our Beaches Clean

by Joe Oakes

Last Saturday I went for my final August swim at Broughton Beach. Broughton Beach is on the Columbia River, right behind PDX. The swimming area is long enough for a few laps back and forth. It is a place on the Columbia River where I can feel safe from heavy boat traffic. The currents are relatively gentle, and the temperature in late summer is at its warmest, in the seventies. There are usually very few swimmers, and that is quite okay with me.

But on that Saturday I noticed something very different. When I came out of the water, I saw about 30 folks walking up and down the beach, bent over, obviously picking up trash. I know that Metro has workers who have the responsibility to pick up trash. I also know that Metro is strapped for cash, and that some services can be in short supply. I wondered, Who are these people cleaning the beach? So I asked. Here is what I learned.

Two like-minded groups often get together at Broughton

Beach to swim and congregate. One is called Black Swimming Initiative, and it is captained by Morgan Spriggs. Morgan's goal is to see that Black children learn to swim and be comfortable in the water. The second group, WaterStrong, is headed by Dena Marshall. WaterStrong wants to teach children to swim and to be environmentally conscious. Both groups want our beaches to be clean and inviting. That Saturday, they joined forces to clean up Broughton Beach for the Metro.

Two things: First, thanks to both groups, not only for trash pickup on that day, but also for their larger mission. Good people are among us, we just have to look for them. Second, I know that it is also my responsibility to add my own efforts to keep our world clean and safe. And that thinking goes far beyond cleaning the beaches.

If I may paraphrase an ancient Jewish philosopher: "If not me, who? If not now, when?" If we wait for someone else to do what needs to be done, it might be a very long wait.



Birth of the Ballenas

A "Tale" of Starting a Cold Water Swim Group

by Suzy Happ

It was Oct 6th 2020. The pandemic was in full swing and the pools were all closed. Being part of the Merfolk open water swim group had been my summer's saving grace. But the water temps were falling in Portland, OR, and Merfolk didn't swim sub-60 degrees, so my mind turned to what to do over the winter. I really didn't want to stop swimming, but the water was going to get so cold, and only really bonkers or really brave people swam in really cold water, right?! Not middle aged moms who tended towards anxiety.

So I posted an article about the benefits of cold water swimming on my Facebook page and kind of nervously floated it out there that I wanted to try it. My friend Jeanine commented, saying she'd like to give it a go, even if only once. (HA!) Another swim friend Christina replied, "You know I am with you!!" And a third friend, Moe, messaged me separately, almost too vulnerable to make it public. "I think I'd like to give this a try-- I'm a really sucky swimmer but I can do a little breast stroke". As serendipity works, when you start to think about a thing, you begin to notice that thing everywhere. A little snippet of conversation here, an article there, and the ball just kept on rolling. I heard of a webinar on cold water swimming which I attended with the friends who had expressed interest. After the presentation, I mustered the courage to ask the presenter how to join a local cold water swim group, and her answer to me was, "I would like to encourage you to start your own!" What? Me? It seemed preposterous, really; I mean, I didn't know anything about it! And I didn't quite understand why I couldn't just sign up with some existing group. (Let me assure you that now, a year later, I fully and completely understand).

So we picked a date and showed up at Broughton Beach on the Columbia River a few miles from home and got in the water and swam. It already seemed cold, perhaps 58 degrees? Little did we know what was to come! From there, Christina told Jen M, who posted on a Facebook swim group, and she told Leah and Maggie who she knew in other swim circles; and Maxx, who doesn't often use facebook but was looking for company in the water, read the post, and Brad, who NEVER uses Facebook (for philosophical principles), logged in for a day hoping to find other swimmers, and gave his email address, which Maxx responded to immediately. Jeanine brought Marc and Jen S who were talking about it in their anti-racism group. Moe told Kristen, who was a mom at the same school as her daugh-



ter. Elsa found out from Andrea, who had found out from Christina. Robin swam with another cold water group and lived in the neighborhood and would also occasionally join us. Brad invited Debra, just under the wire before we closed our group, around New Year's. And in this manner, slowly but surely over time, the pool refugees arrived at Broughton Beach to try this new thing.

What came next is a bit of a blur, in terms of nailing down exact timelines, but in looking back, I think it was somehow infused with a bit of magic. Early on, we got a name. Ballenas is Spanish for whale (the double LL sounds like a Y, btw). It came to me easily. I'm bilingual and there are many words that just sound so much prettier in Spanish, plus it began with a B and we swam at Broughton Beach. Plus whales are really cool cold-water swimmers. So it has stuck. We swam, we talked about safety, we swam, we tried to communicate with each other, we swam, we tried to figure out how many people we could actually accommodate in our group, we swam some more. We found out cool things about each other, like what we did when we weren't cold-water swimming. So many amazing things—music and art and poetry, oh, my! The temps dropped more. I made some mistakes pretty early on with communicating by these unwieldy group texting threads that we kept adding people to, but would invariably drop people when someone replied to an old text instead of a new one; then people would miss out on information. Same with email...it was just dumb. But soon I realized there were people with greater tech skills than me in the group (a trained monkey would have been better, honestly, I mean, not to dis monkeys by saying that, but...). So I started reaching out to Brad who became fondly known (to me anyway) as the IT guy, who introduced us to the GroupMe

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Gut Health is Important

Webinar presented by Oregon Masters Swimming

Dr. Kirstin Lauritzen is a Functional Medicine Practitioner in Oregon. Her doctorate is in Chiropractic, and she holds a Master's in Human Nutrition and Functional Medicine. Dr K specializes in working with athletes to prevent nutrient deficiencies so that they can optimize their performance, longevity in their sport, reduce risk of injury and promote a healthy body!

Dr K encourages her athletes and patients to understand how each system functions, both individually and together. She stresses that we need to look for the cause behind symptoms; unhelpful thoughts, or routines that don't serve us, because then we find the why, and that's where new habits and change really begins.

She is a USMS member of the Oregon City Tankers, an Ironman, and swims on a regular basis.

Is gut health something you've heard about recently? It's become a topic of question and conversation as we discover more about how gut health affects the human body as a whole.

In fact, did you know that there's a nerve that connects the gut and the brain and it's a direct highway of communication between the brain and the bacteria in your gut?

Gut health has a big impact for the athlete or fitness enthusiast:

- The gut microbiome controls a large part of the immune system, meaning, when it's in balance you'll spend less time out of practice due to colds and the flu.
- Because the gut controls so much of the inflammation in the body, it can impact joint health and inflammation, which when high, can lead to degeneration, arthritis and be the cause behind joint pain. Research is starting to pose the theory that when the gut is healthy, your risk of injuries taking you out of sport and training is lower.
- The GI tract also controls how you absorb nutrients



from your food, hydration and fueling during sport.

- Although health and performance aren't and shouldn't be based on weight alone, weight can be a factor in health concerns and risk, especially when we have increased visceral fat - or fat around the internal organs. There are certain ratios of bacteria in the gut that can lead to weight gain or difficulty losing weight, and those same bacteria can also cause irritable bowel symptoms.

I'll be giving you a few simple tips that you can easily apply in your daily life. We'll talk about when it's appropriate to use a probiotic, and also why probiotics aren't the answer to all of the problems with your GI tract. We'll especially discuss when probiotics are likely making the problem worse, not better. We'll discuss simple food choices you can easily make to help build up the diversity in your gut, and we'll talk briefly about lab options you have if you would like to learn more about the health of your GI tract.

When your GI tract is balanced, it impacts both your health and performance at the gym and in sport. I look forward to seeing you on the next webinar!

Webinar

Time: Nov 9, 2021, 06:00 PM Pacific Time (US and Canada)
Join Zoom Meeting <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/81382880000?pwd=UTd3aHMvYVcrZkQrWnpnN3V1Z2dFZz09>
Meeting ID: 813 8288 0000
Passcode: swim



USMS NATIONALS

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Records set at this meet were published in the September, 2021, issue of the Aqua Master: <https://swimoregon.org/AquaMaster/2021/08September2021AM.pdf> (see page 7). Results by swimmer or by club can be found at this link: <https://www.usms.org/comp/meets/meet.php?MeetID=20210721S002NCY>



Val Jenkins (on the right) with her sister Janice Campagna. Janice swims for North Carolina.



At a non-profit cat adoption store in downtown Greensboro. The kids are Emerson & Mavis, Christine McClafferty's children. This picture was taken during the swim meet week.

OFF THE BLOCK

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And here is Bob's story ... about cancer.



In 2006, I also developed a serious health issue. I learned that I had a small tumor on the outside of my left kidney. My urologist advised me to have it removed as soon as possible. I went to a world-class medical center here in North Carolina and had cryoablation surgery, a procedure that froze the tumor off. Unfortunately, it turned out to be malignant.

The surgeon advised me that he got the entire growth but explained that this type of tumor has been known to return. He never brought up the idea of how changing what I eat could help prevent a recurrence of my cancer.

So, thanks to my wife Fran, and my desire to lessen the chance of recurrence, I also adopted a whole-food plant-based diet as a means of prevention and have been cancer-free for 14 years! I, too, am very thankful. But wait, there's more! We heard that my surgeon has since switched to the same diet as ours!

So there you have it! Our own stories on how switching to a whole-food plant-based diet can work to not only reverse disease, but it can also work to prevent it. We are now feeling Better Than Ever! It is our privilege to share our stories and hopefully inspire others.

To learn more about Dr. McDougall's program, view his educational materials and books, and to receive a free newsletter, go to drmcDougall.com

COACHES CHAIR

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water. Don't get me wrong: expecting success can be a healthy thing, and attacking each race like you're going to get it is great, but it has to be taken into context.

In a nutshell, I'd spoiled myself.

When things started to level off and PRs became fewer and farther between, it was very depressing and discouraging, and I wondered what was wrong with me. It was incredibly frustrating.

Worse still, my misconceptions had even spilled over into my academic career. While I had taken the skills and work ethic that I'd developed in the pool and applied it to school, I expected nothing but straight A's, and anything less was more or less tantamount to the Apocalypse!

But, a common theme in both athletics, academics, career, etc. is the fact that the higher you go and the more you achieve, the harder it becomes to get better and maintain that level of success.

Long story short, and although it was extremely hard and discouraging at times, I didn't give up, and the rest is history... and I'm by no means the only victim of early and excessive success.

And that brings up the other side of the coin: dealing with hardship and frustration.

If you're worried about not seeing much (or any) success so far this season, keep on pushing. It will come, if not right away.

And when it does, it will be all the more rewarding.

Again, you must understand that progress is not constant or linear. You'll have periods of improvement and stagnation, and at times, it'll feel like you've regressed, even if you're doing everything you need to be doing to achieve success: training hard and smart, eating right, getting adequate rest and sleep, etc.

It's a process that you need to learn to love and understand if you truly want to succeed in anything.

But for now, take each practice, each meet, each race, as a

lesson. There is no such thing as a loss, especially at this point in the season.

If you don't do well in training or in a race, examine what you need to do better, and apply it.

Perhaps your strategy needs to be tweaked. Your coach will (or should...) be happy to work with you, and it will probably take a good deal of trial and error over the course of this season, if not multiple seasons.

Maybe there's a technical issue or two. You'll have to work those out in practice - form new and better habits in training, and they'll be there for you in a competitive situation.

Or, you just may need to work on your mental state before, during, and after a race. In many cases, athletes can be as perfectly prepared physically as possible, but if something's not right upstairs, it may all be for naught.

Remember the analogy of the race car: the car is revved up and ready to go, but it can't drive itself; it's up to the driver to get the job done.

Whatever the reason, if you focus on the lessons to be learned from struggles, and do what you need to improve, then they are not really struggles at all, or even losses, for that matter.

You either win, or you learn...and if you keep learning, you will eventually win!

SWIMMER SPOTLIGHT

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By now, you could guess the story of my college career. My success in the pool traded years—lackluster Freshman year, great Sophomore year, mediocre Junior year, stand-out Senior year—but my effort never receded. I found satisfaction by trying my hardest, at all my endeavors. In 2011 I managed to finish my collegiate career with best times, but I gained more than the clock could ever show. A hanai family, locals who welcomed me as a daughter of their own, and appreciation for the beauty and culture that surrounded me. At the end of the day life is all right when you wake up to a rainbow, no matter the storm that came before it.

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SWIMMER SPOTLIGHT

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I never knew how many lessons swimming would teach me. How it would always help me feel at home — like when I moved back to Portland and found my MAC Masters family. How it would introduce me to fast friends who inspire me in the pool and out — thanks to Nationals team trips with fellow Oregon Masters swimmers. How often it would be there when work is hard or life is tough, yet a 6 p.m. dip on Mondays/Wednesdays cures all. The rush of cold, the bubbles as each stroke methodically, meditatively flows one after the other, the endorphin-charged, seconds-long conversations between sets. My spirit refreshes and confidence resets, whenever I resurface.

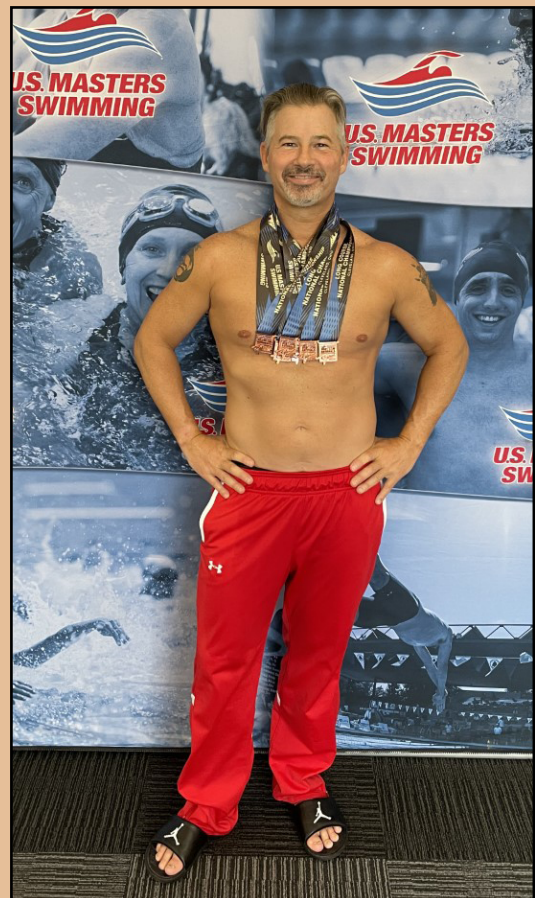
2020 hit like a punch in the stomach and took many things away that we love the most—the pool being just one of them. I'm sure each of us had to battle through in our own way to make it out the other side, and I hope my fellow Oregon Masters are healthy and doing all right. 2021, surprisingly, turned out to be my toughest year yet. In February I was hospitalized with a burst appendix in a city that wasn't my home, away from family that the pandemic kept at bay while I recovered. Thankfully, my partner was allowed to visit and never left my side. Nor did my swim family, whose long distance texts inspired me to heal fast—the only thing better than swimming fast. Would you believe the first question I asked my surgeon was, "When can I get back in the pool?"

I am happy to report as of this month I am fully recovered. Though it is taking a while to get back up to speed, I will never

forget how good it felt that first dip back in the water after my accident (burst appendix). I was slower than I had ever been, just floating really, but I was home. Looking up at the sky, water rippling by, smiling like the kid who fell in love with the water, after all.



Jessica was a model in an S.R.Smith photo shoot a few years ago. This image, promoting S.R.Smith starting blocks, has been featured in advertisements in many places, including SwimSwam, Swimming World and the Association of Aquatic Professionals!



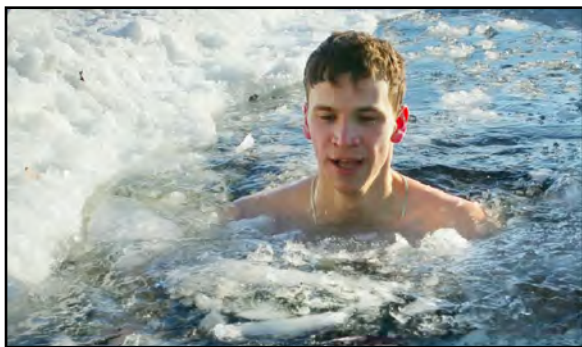
Christian Tujo was the only representative of Oregon at the 2021 Long Course National Meet in Cleveland, Ohio. He placed in the top 10 in all 6 of his events, including 4 Oregon Top 12 times, for 50-54 age group. Cleveland Rocks!

BIRTH OF THE BALLENAS

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texting app and got us in a Google group email. It was not very complicated stuff, he assures me, but the point is that we all have our skills and it's good to delegate. And those two things REALLY helped with our communication problems. And we swam some more.

We paid attention to basic safety. We informed ourselves through internet searches about hypothermia. We didn't swim alone, and we all used swim buoys. We shared emergency contact numbers. We swam in sight of each other between the "teeth", or fence-posts going out into the channel on the eastern border of the beach, and the "wall" on the western side separating us from the marina. We increased our times gradually to avoid "cold shock". Then we decreased our times when it got too cold. Some used wetsuits, or some combo of paraphernalia meant to reduce the pain of cold water swimming: swim shirts, booties, gloves, thermal caps, or in Debra's case, a fashionable wool cap perched upon her head-out-of-water, and some caps just in our suits; many of us ditched the props along the way to see what it felt like to "swim skins" which is NOT naked btw, it just means a bathing suit and a latex cap. We were all different levels of swim skill and competitiveness, and it just didn't matter. We had our common denominator.



And the water got colder. And when the water temps were somewhere in the 40s, we started noticing how Elsa would stagger up the beach like a drunken sailor and one time Christina could not possibly think through the task of getting into her warm clothes, so our social worker in the group, Kristen, had to talk her through each step, as if she were a kindergartener, but not at all condescendingly, of course. Sorry to pick on Christina, but on another occasion, she couldn't add 6+3 in the parking lot so we had to temporarily confiscate her car keys. BTW these are all signs of hypothermia. The health care workers among us started freaking out, knowing that, if this escalated, we would have to deal with the emergency until

the ambulance arrived. We realized we needed help; we were all pretty much newbies at this and it was starting to get scary. So we consulted with a few of the Yetis by Zoom. The Yetis are a legendary and iconic group of cold water swimmers in Portland with 4-5 more years worth of experience than us. It was so helpful to meet them, and be able to ask very candid and pointed questions; to hear the way they did things, especially how they kept each other safe while keeping things fun, and the ways they cared for each other on the beach which led to their sense of community.

After that Zoom, we started trying to warm up more on shore instead of the "car sauna" technique, though that was always an option if needed! And the more we hung out, the more community really started to build. We admired Maxx's excellent warm-up beach prancing, Jen S's dedicated beach cleaning, and everyone's ridiculous efforts to be modest as we changed our clothes right there on the beach, to get out of the dreaded hypothermia-inducing wet bathing suit into our cozy stuff. We zipped zippers and pulled down sweaters and fetched keys and towels and snappy heat packs for each other. We laughed A LOT! We doubled down on rules. In warmer temps, we could keep a "loose eye" on each other as we swam, but as it got chilly we started to buddy up more formally. And when combined air/water temps dropped below 100 degrees, we had to have at least one designated shore support person watching out for us, mostly Debra's husband, Super Shore Support Steve, or SSSS for short. Or my hubby Chris, or Brad's wife Mare. Or Leah who didn't like swimming below 50 degrees, or Robin who was just a generous person and willing to brave the ugliest of weather. More often than not, though, we would just divide into 2 groups so one group could watch the other and vice versa.

And we swam some more. We braved all kinds of weather, some more bravely than others. The snowstorm hit and Jen S flew down the snowy beach on a sled into the water while Kristen cackled maniacally in the background and became an internet sensation. The water temp dropped below 40 and swims got REAL short. And the teeth got buried beneath the flood waters at one point and it was cold and choppy and gray and rainy and windy, and we loved it. And we hated it too at times, but underneath the hate was a joy and a fierce clinging to the weird state change and the after-drop and the shivering and the ultimate euphoria. And all our friends thought we were nuts. But we unearthed parts of ourselves previously unknown. We marveled at our own bravery; this motley crew of wonderful people all thrown together by an impossible dream of cold

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BIRTH OF THE BALLENAS

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water swimming. And now they are my family.

By the end of the season, we were ready to give something back to the world and to our river; Maggie, our resident sunshine-bringer who was also a fundraiser, proposed a week of swimming fundraising for Columbia Riverkeeper and we embraced it. We raised about \$14,000 and at the end of the week we had a big (socially distanced) celebration on the beach with soup and awards and thrift store treasure gifts, and good feelings all around. As the group founder, I got the “anchor”, this hunking piece of metal from the bottom of the river that I absolutely hated swimming over in my shallow lane swims. But they dug it up for me and gifted it to me and it was the best gift ever. Along with a poem by Elsa that is framed and prominently displayed for any days in need of a pick-me-up.

Spring and summer rolled round; the other swim groups started meeting again, and on the first swims, everyone was like, wow! the water is so cold! and we would look at each other and laugh inside because our frame of reference regarding what classified as cold water was forever altered. Throughout the summer, many of us swam with the other groups-- the River Huggers, the Merfolk, the Milwaukie Bay Peahens; and Jen M planned some really long 2 to 5 mile swim adventures for those who were up for the challenge, and we did some camping trips together that centered around swimming. But we also kept swimming at Broughton, because that is clearly the home of the Broughton Beach Ballena, and we needed to migrate back there to keep it all going.

Which brings us back to the beginning. Throughout the past year, many people have come up to us on the beach and asked us, How can I join your group? It's always hard to answer; because at heart we are welcoming people, but over time we came to understand the reasons to keep such a group relatively small--potential issues with Covid, communication, safety, and group cohesiveness would grow along with numbers. So we have given similar answers to the one we originally got way back in October, 2020. Elsa also put a lot of work into a sheet of paper with cold water swimming resources for folks to take away. And we did a webinar with Oregon Masters Swimming on this topic, because it has brought such joy into our lives that we want everyone who has that little spark of an interest to find their people.

You don't need to be a Yeti, or a Ballena. There are plenty

of other names out there waiting for your group to choose them, and plenty of water for plenty of other swim groups to enjoy. Or you might just find a buddy who swims at your pace and go that route. All you need is the impulse, the guts to reach out to others around you to find out who else is interested, attention to safety in this inherently risky endeavor and maybe also a little bit of magic along the way. We'd love to help out if you have questions. We do not claim to be experts, but we do have the experience of starting our own group and becoming a whale pod family in just one year.

How to Start a Cold-water Swimming Group

A webinar presented by Oregon Masters Swimming

Interested in trying cold water swimming but don't know how to start? We were in the same position last year around this time and were given the wise counsel in a cold-water swimming webinar to “start our own group”.

One year and 100+ cold water group swims later we've learned a thing or two about how to go about this and we would love to share this experience. You can join the Broughton Beach Ballenas Suzy Happ, Christina Malango, and Brad Biddle for this fun and informative webinar when it is posted on the OMS website. Watch for it!



Willard Lamb (Wink) on his tractor Oct 3, 2021. He will be 99 years old in December. Therefore, according to USMS rules, beginning in 2022 he will be eligible to swim in the 100-104 age group. Wink is continuing his swimming workouts now. He is impressive! Look how young he looks! Does that mean swimming keeps you looking younger as you age? I believe it does.

Summary

Records & Results. . .

No meet results

Looking Ahead. . .

Pool Schedule

<i>Date</i>	<i>Course</i>	<i>Swim</i>	<i>Location</i>
<i>December 11, 2021; Saturday</i>	<i>SCM</i>	<i>12th Annual Bend All-Around Challenge</i>	<i>Bend, OR</i>

Quote for the Month. . .

Doing great things requires going into the unknown, of pushing ourselves and our abilities, and yes, that means there will be moments where we are uncomfortable, where we struggle, and where we are inundated with doubt, insecurities and fear.

—Michael Phelps

Registration can be found at <http://swimoregon.org/events/>

If you have set up your USMS login, you will be able to:

- Update your own USMS registration information—<https://www.usms.org/reg/member/updateinfo.php>*
- Print Your Own USMS Membership Card—<https://www.usms.org/reg/getcard.php>*

If you swim in any meet outside of Oregon and want your time considered for a record, you are the one who is responsible for notifying the OMS Records-keeper, Steve Darnell, at financialwizard2@comcast.net.