

Chlorine Chronicle

2007-2008 Swim Season

Promoting life-long fitness through swimming



*Nepean Masters Swim Club
Established 1977
E-mail: info@nmsc.org
www.nmsc.org*

*Carla St-Germain, Editor
Chlorine Chronicle
Send your feedback to
newsletter@nmsc.org*

IN THIS ISSUE...

- | | |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| President's Message, p. 2 | Swimming to Feel Alive, p. 10 |
| Ross Brown's Top 10 p. 3 | Diary of a Rookie Triathlete, p. 13 |
| Coach's Corner, p. 4 | Adventures of NMSC Triathletes, p. 16 |
| My Battle with Breast Cancer, p. 6 | 2008 NMSC Swim Meet, p. 18 |
| Baden Then, NMSC Now, p. 8 | How to Become an Official p. 19 |
| Swimmer's Shoulder, p. 9 | Tony's City Chase Adventures, p. 22 |

*Cover photo by Brian Robertson
NMSC intraclub fun meet, November 2007*

2007-2008 Swim Season

Reflections of the current season

Barry Doucette, NMSC President



I hope everyone is having a great 2007-2008 swim season. It seems like only yesterday that I started in the position of president, but it's been more than 18 months now. I continue to be impressed by our club and the commitment of our executive, our swimmers, and our coaches.

We continue our involvement in the community in numerous ways. Last June we celebrated our 10th consecutive year participating in the annual Ottawa Dragon Boat Festival. Every year John Burrows spends hours organizing the team and handcrafting the team paddles. For the last 7 years NMSC has been the proud sponsor of the Breast Cancer Survivor Cup, and in June 2007 we had our very own Louise Desjardins present the prestigious award to the winning crew of Bosom Buddies from Nova Scotia. In celebration of our 10 years as participants in this event, John Burrows created a commemorative scrapbook, which you can view on our Web site at www.nmsc.org.

Last summer, thanks to the coaching, mentoring, and organizational skills of Olivier Mouyau, a subgroup of NMSC swimmers formed the "Triathletes of Nepean Masters Swim Club." The group ordered flashy NMSC triathlon suits that were seen at various competitions throughout Ontario, Quebec, Upper New York State, and thanks to Peggie Slavin, the suit even made an appearance on ESPN in the U.S.

Our club's mission is "to promote life-long fitness through swimming." I was blessed to be behind the scenes at Doug Petty's funeral service where the team provided Doug's family and friends with food and beverages for the reception. I saw many swim friends and lane mates celebrate Doug's life. While looking at the amazing photo display of Doug with family and friends, a club member pointed out a photo of a younger Doug with Eric Thompson and said, "That picture was taken at the 1993 Vancouver Nationals." Doug was a member of our team for 24 years and a living example of life-long

fitness through swimming. We miss you Doug!

I have always believed that swimming is about establishing and cultivating great friendships. Over the last year I have seen this from every perspective—through support of members of our swimming family in time of grief, congratulatory e-mails at the time of birth of a new little NMSC member-to-be, the dragon boaters who practise hard and return every year, the triathletes meeting for practice and races, the different swimming groups that swim together at Meech Lake, the weekly nine holes played by longtime lane mates, girls dinners, boys poker nights, and the list goes on. Let's celebrate the gains we all make and the friendships we have formed all from simply meeting a few times a week in a swimming pool.

Congratulations to every member of our club. Swim passionately and have a great swim season! ■

2007-2008 NMSC Executive

Club President—Barry Doucette

Past President—Brian Robertson

Treasurer—Peggie Slavin

Secretary—Glenn MacDougall

Newsletter Editor—Carla St-Germain

Registrar—Angela Scavone

Equipment Manager—Ross Brown

Webmaster—Trevor Holt

VP Publicity—John Burrows

Winterlude Meet Manager—Derek Parker

VP A Group—Malcolm Brown

VP B Group—Brian Wolfe

VP C Group—Sandra Fox

VP D Group—Olivier Mouyau

Non-voting contributors

Assistant Registrar—Tony Woods

Triathlete Representative—Olivier Mouyau

Ross Brown's motivational top 10

Ross Brown, A Group

Since I'm into my 27th year with the Nepean Masters Swim Club and have swum over 500,000 metres of the pool, some have asked me how I have managed to remain a member so long. What follows are some tips that help me cope. To begin, I should mention that if you are a competitive swimmer you should ignore most of my suggestions; in fact, you should probably do just the opposite.

1. Try to avoid coaches who:
 - also teach kids as these coaches will expect you to swim as fast 10 year olds;
 - use "Ben's Special Drills";
 - frequently refer to or record something in a little notebook;
 - have deck workouts when swimming is temporarily cancelled due to a power failure.
2. Don't swim in lanes 1 or 8 because the coach can walk along side you as you swim. Under these conditions, your faults are much more easily visible.
3. Never admit that a workout or set is too easy—it only encourages the coach to make the workout harder.
4. Get into the habit of swimming regularly. If you try to decide before each session if you will go or stay home, you will always come up with more reasons to skip swimming.
5. Take the summer off. Your skin needs to have a time to "de-pucker." Also, peaking in September tends to discourage coaches.
6. Listen to your body. It is the best judge of your conditioning.
7. Volunteer to help run the club because there is an unwritten rule that members of the executive can draft the swimmer in front.
8. Turn into the lane you will be entering. Collisions with the person following you tend to reduce the fun of swimming.

9. Help with setting up and taking down the equipment—consider it cross training.
10. Have fun because if it isn't fun, why are you swimming?



Swim for Heart

NMSC is hosting its 25th annual Swim for Heart fundraiser for the Heart and Stroke Foundation. The event takes place the week of March 16 to March 23.

Every NMSC member is asked to participate in a 30 minute continuous swim, during which swimmers try to complete as many lengths as possible. While some members swim, others are on deck counting laps for them. This is not a race—it is to measure personal achievement only! Club members are asked to get pledges and all funds raised go directly to the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Ontario (Note: Pledges over \$10 are tax deductible).

Pledge forms are available from your Group VP and must be returned by March 28, 2008.

"It's been told that swimming is a wimp sport, but I don't see it. We don't get timeouts, in the middle of a race we can't stop and catch our breath, we can't roll on our stomachs and lie there, and we can't ask for a substitution."

—Author unknown

Coach's Corner

NMSC coaches were asked in September about their coaching goals for the 2007-2008 season. Now that we're halfway through the season, let's look at what they said and assess how well we've done at helping them meet those goals.

Coaching goals for the 2007-2008 season



With the season going well, I have observed a renewed enthusiasm in groups C and D. The baby boom of the 2006/07 season is now behind us, the core group of swimmers have returned, and we have an influx of new swimmers. Welcome to all! What are my priorities and goals for the season? Very simply, I am hoping that every swimmer will:

- Have fun;
- Want to attend practice (consistent attendance, challenging and enjoyable workouts—not just freestyle!);
- Strive to improve their stroke technique (focus on drills to improve efficiency and speed); and,
- Set their own goals for the season.

Finally, there are a number of swimmers in the groups (they know who they are) who don't believe that this coach can swim... It is my goal this season to bring closure to this myth. Enjoy, have fun, and see you at the pool. *Coach Bill Westcott, C and D Groups*



Our side of the pool is multi-level and very busy most mornings with an average of six swimmers per lane. 18 new swimmers have come into our lanes this year and some of the returning swimmers have moved on to Bill's side of the pool.

I have a top 10 "Coach's Wish List." Swimmers will:

1. Attend 90% of practices.
2. Learn everyone's name.
3. Arrive 5 minutes early.
4. Slow down and do all drills perfectly.
5. Do some other form of physical activity weekly.
6. Help with our annual Winterlude Meet.
7. Compete at least once.
8. Use the pace clock.
9. Love difficult sets and drills.
10. Leave feeling satisfied.

I always look forward to greeting my swimmers in the morning and respect the effort they make to get up early and start their day doing something great. *Coach Marianne Black, D Group*



I would like to have at least one swimmer compete in a swim meet. The opportunity to test your own limits, talk with other competitors, and have fun is there for the taking. I'd like to see lanes 3 and 4 gain the endurance and technique to swim a 3500 m practice. We can achieve this goal in part through more consistent attendance by swimmers. In our busy lives, this is a little "me" time. I'd also like to have the opportunity to chat with the wonderful members of my group on a more social time away from the pool. *Coach Pat Gosse, C Group*



I'm very excited to be coaching my 15th season with NMSC. The last three years I've been motivated to get in shape by swimming, running, and eating healthier. I hope to transfer some of this motivating energy to my swimmers as we approach the winter months and end the season with championship meets. Our focus this year will be learning how to swim fast at swim meets. It's important that we all collect as much racing experience as possible over the next 5 months. During workouts challenge the swimmers in the next lane. Racing each other will raise

the bar for everyone in the group. The added pressure at practice will help you adapt to swim meet environments, which will result in better performances.

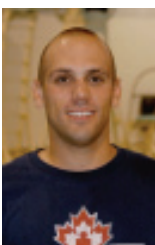
Coach Steve's Tips on Swimming Faster:

- When the coach says swim easy or slow... SWIM SLOW.
- When the coach says take extra rest... Take the rest. The added rest and easy swimming will allow you to gain additional energy to swim fast when it really counts.
- Learn how to swim fast by increasing your turnover, but at the same time holding your stroke technique together.
- Work hard at every practice.
- Swimming is easy. Swimming fast is hard.

Coach Steve Papai, A Group



When thinking about coaching goals this year, the item that stood out was attendance at practices. With so many commitments, it's easy to let your swim workouts fall by the wayside, especially at the end of a long day. To encourage swimmers to attend, October was set as our first "Attendance Challenge" month. There was a three way tie! Rosemary, Steve, and Ross attended 12 out of 13 practices. Not only do these swimmers get bragging rights, but they also get to pick a set. One swimmer traded in his reward, choosing instead to have me bring in cookies for the group. *Coach Nathalie Bélair Jones, Groups B & T*



When you come to my practices, please leave your ego at the door! And I mean this in a nice way. Guess who is the only person allowed to bring his ego to the pool... you guessed it... me and only me, your favourite coach. What I mean is that you should come to practice not to compete with your co-swimmers, but rather to improve. You do not always need to lead your lane; you can leave last and focus on your stroke.

This year, I plan to include more strength workouts, followed by some power practices later on during the year. So, basically, we will try to do a better periodization throughout the year. A periodization in any sport must include a base and endurance phase, followed by a strength phase, and finally a power phase. The power phase is usually done closer to competition.

And as you should expect, we will do the Ben's special drill again, and again, and again. And when we have done this drill a lot, we'll do it again. Have a good season! *Coach Ben Ouellette, Group B and S*



Being my first full year of coaching, I have a very specific personal goal of learning all I can so that I can be the best I can at coaching. At the beginning of the year I asked each swimmer to provide me with a personal goal. My goal now is to help each swimmer achieve that personal goal. Your goals mainly included getting faster and getting in better shape. However, in order to meet those goals, I have just a couple of very small expectations of my group—attend all practices (this one is very important) and work hard. *Coach Shelley Demkiw, Group A*

"I know you've heard it a thousand times before. But it's true—hard work pays off. If you want to be good, you have to practice, practice, practice. If you don't love something, then don't do it."

—Ray Bradbury

My battle with breast cancer

Louise Desjardins, C Group



I got the phone call at home the evening of April 26, 2007 while I was watching a Sens playoff game. The surgeon confirmed that the lump I had found in my left breast was malignant, probably invasive ductal carcinoma, and that he had booked me in for surgery on May 24th. I don't remember if the Sens won that night. The next day I went to work and Paul, my husband, went to the surgeon's office to pick up requisitions for all the pre-operative tests. I didn't have much time to be scared, everything happened too fast. I was in shock, denial, and I felt betrayed by my body. I had always been active, I never smoked, only had a drink on special occasions, and ate a healthy diet. This wasn't supposed to happen to me! The fear came later when I first walked into the chemotherapy treatment unit at the Cancer Centre.

I'm among the lucky ones. The cancer was in an early stage so the surgeon performed a lumpectomy and a sentinel node biopsy (three nodes) which showed that there were no cancer cells in my lymph nodes. I conserved most of my breast and my prognosis is very good.

The pathology report revealed that the tumour was hormone sensitive (ER-positive and PR-positive) as is the case for two-thirds of all breast cancers in women under 50 years of age. This means that I must take the drug Tamoxifen for the next few years. Tamoxifen blocks the production of estrogen therefore inducing menopause.

I received four cycles of chemotherapy, which lasted for about two hours each—the first treatment was on July 17th and the last on September 19th. Two weeks after the first treatment, I was showering one morning to find my hair falling out in big chunks. Since I didn't want to go through this again, I asked Paul to shave my head as soon as I got out of the shower.

I'd like to say that the chemotherapy wasn't that bad, but unfortunately it was. The nausea and vomiting wasn't the worst I had to deal with; my esophagus became so tight and my stomach in such pain that I couldn't swallow anything for five days following a treatment, not even water. After the third treatment, I ended up in the emergency, severely dehydrated and needed intravenous hydration for the next three days. Not only was I not able to eat for five days after the third treatment, I completely lost my appetite for the next 21 days before my next (and last) chemo treatment, and then for another three weeks after that. Needless to say, I lost quite a bit of weight and became very weak.

"I didn't have much time to be scared, everything happened too fast. I was in shock, in denial, and I felt betrayed by my body."

A month after the last chemo treatment, I started the radiation therapy. Radiation therapy is administered everyday for a period of three to five weeks. Again I was lucky—I only needed 16 treatments. The major side effect of radiation treatment is fatigue that usually starts two weeks into the treatment and can last up to four weeks after the treatments are finished. I slowly started to recover from these treatments around Christmas.

I knew that it was imperative that I remain active as much as possible during the treatments. Two weeks after the surgery I was riding my bike; it was actually less painful to bike than to walk. As soon as the surgeon gave his "OK," I started to swim again in July and I swam through most of the chemo treatments. However, after the last treatment I was very weak and tired and stopped swimming for a month. I slowly got back in the pool during the radiation treatments in November and have continued to swim ever since. In July, I registered for the Running Room Breast Cancer Survivor clinic to meet other women who either had breast cancer or were survivors. My good friend Sandra Fox picked me up every week and stayed with me—running when I was able to or slowly walking depending on where I was in the chemo cycle.

A diagnosis of cancer affects all the people around you—your spouse, family members, and close friends must cope with their emotions and adjust to cancer being part of daily life. My husband and family members were extremely supportive and very present. Paul accompanied me to all my appointments and treatments, and my sister Nora would come spend a few nights with us after the chemo treatments. During those months, I went through periods of hopelessness and depression. I know that for my family this journey was just as difficult and scary as it was for me.

When I first got the diagnosis, I decided to be open and honest about the cancer. It was only a matter of time before people would know and I preferred that they learn it from me. I must admit that I was amazed and deeply touched by the tremendous support and kindness showed by my NMSC friends and swim mates, coaches Pat and Bill, as well as the club's executive members. The flowers, cards, gifts, and kind words helped me get through those difficult moments. In June, John Burrows kindly invited me to present the Breast Cancer Survivor Cup at the Ottawa Dragon Boat Race Festival, which was a privilege. My friend Peggie Slavin, who lives on my street, would stop by regularly to ask how I was doing and to cheer me up. Sandra brought me food and encouragement. In the summer to keep my spirits up, Peggie started to organize dinners with our lane friends—Sandra, Judy, Tracey, Missy, Carla. These dinners have now grown to include many more of our swimming friends.

I've now embarked on a new journey—survivorship or the “new” normal. The end of treatment brought mixed emotions—fear of recurrence (the “Damocles syndrome”), uncertainty about the long-term medical follow-up, anxiety about the physical effects of the treatment, and an increased sense of vulnerability. But this experience has also given me a new sense of self-esteem and resilience (this was my Mount Everest), a better appreciation of life and the mundane, strong spiritual growth, and deeper and more meaningful relationships.

I now feel grateful and fortunate to have lived through this experience; it held many gifts for me.

And to all you women out there, I say:

- Perform your breast self-examination EVERY month.
- Have a physician examine your breast ONCE a year.
- If you find a suspicious lump or have doubts, don't delay, consult immediately.

- Show up for your scheduled mammogram (don't “misplace” the requisition).

For women under 40, if you have concerns and don't feel you're being heard, insist on further investigation or seek a second opinion.

Cheers and live consciously! ■

TEAMMATES WANTED

Nepean Masters Swim Club is once again entering a team in the Ottawa Dragon Boat Race Festival. This is our 11th year competing in the festival and our 8th year sponsoring the Breast Cancer Survivor Cup.

There are several openings on the team for both males and females, and we do need a steersperson.

The cost is \$125 for the practices and the festival. The practices are from 6:00 to 7:00 a.m. Tuesday and Friday mornings beginning around May 20 and continuing right up to the festival weekend June 21 and 22.

If you are interested, contact John Burrows at jburrows@sympatico.ca or Tel. 613-820-1879.



Baden then, NMSC now... 30 years later

Brian Wolfe, B Group

My daughter made the NKB team this year. I am extremely proud of her for that. For one reason or another I never was able to teach her much about how to swim. ("Leave me alone Dad, I just want to have fun!") Despite what I perceived to be an important gap in her education, she turned out to be a natural swimmer and I love watching her practise with NKB.

In the fall, NKB held a fun meet for all the kids in the club where the older kids team up with the younger kids and show them the ropes. I ran into our club president, Barry Doucette, in the stands. His son had joined NKB at the same time as my daughter. As we sat and watched we reminisced about our days as youngsters in our swim clubs. Barry swam with the Petawawa Peta-fins and I swam with the Ottawa Kingfish. Our jaunt through time progressed and I related to Barry a story about a meet I swam in Germany. Back then my dad had a job in France for two years. After struggling through correspondence courses for the first year, my parents decided that it would be better if my sister and I went to the school at the Canadian Forces base in Baden Solingen, Germany. In September 1977 off we went to Baden. My parents boarded us with separate families in separate towns near the base and enrolled us in the school.

I was a bit out of sorts. I was in a different country and away from my family. The only person I knew was my sister and she was a couple of towns away. Well, that wasn't so bad because who wants to hang out with their sister anyway? Sure, most of the people on the base spoke English, but all the kids were army brats and they seemed to all know each other.

In the fall of that year the school organized a swim meet. There was no swim club, but they were going to have a



Brian Wolfe in 1977

"That swimmer just managed to out touch me at the wall."

meet. I saw this as my opportunity to make a splash so to speak. I was 14 and had been in a competitive club since I was 7. With 7 years experience under my belt... er... tiestraining and with no local club, it was obvious I was going to show these army brats how to get along in the water. I would become an instant celebrity! People would look at me in awe and carry me around on their shoulders... Okay, so I was a bit of a dreamer back then. So I entered all the events; I wasn't so modest that I wouldn't mind crushing them in every stroke.

As you can probably imagine, things didn't quite go as planned. On the last length of the first race, I forget what event I was swimming. I could see out of the corner of my eye that there was someone swimming beside me a couple lanes away. I was not happy. How could anyone be keeping up with me? So I poured it on. That swimmer just managed to out-touch me at the wall. I don't know who that guy was, but for every event I entered that day he managed to beat me.

Obviously plans for the parade had to be cancelled.

I had fun in Baden that year, but I never got the recognition that I would have earned with a stunning victory at the pool.

Barry is looking at me as I relate my tale of crushed swimming dreams. Then he says "Hey, you know, I was in Baden too in September of 1977..."



Barry Doucette in 1977

Since I started competing with the Nepean Masters Swim Club four years ago, I have watched your times Barry—always just a bit faster than mine. I tweaked my stroke over the summer and I've been thinking this is my year to out-touch you at the wall. Now I have a little added incentive—it's been almost exactly 30 years since that meet in Baden. ■

Photos from Baden Senior School 1977-78 yearbook.

Swimmer's shoulder

Dr. Barbara Rodwin D.C., D. Acu., A.R.T. (local health care specialist)

Swimmer's shoulder is an inflammatory condition caused by the mechanical impingement of the soft tissues against the coracoacromial arch. This condition is often seen with the freestyle stroke due to its repeated overhead motion. Swimmers often develop shoulder pain as they push harder to go faster and further. This pain may be caused by two different locations of impingement within the shoulder joint.

The first impingement is seen during the pull-through phase of the freestyle stroke. The phase begins when the hand enters the water and completes when the hand has finished pulling the water and begins to exit. If the swimmer's hand enters the water across the midline of the body, this places the shoulder in a position of horizontal adduction known as crossing over. This position causes a mechanical impingement of the long head of the biceps against the anterior part of the coracoacromial arch.

The second impingement may be seen during the recovery phase of the stroke. This phase includes the hand as it is exiting the water until it re-enters. This impingement occurs when the rotator cuff muscles are no longer working efficiently due to the fatigue of the swimmer. It becomes more and more difficult for the swimmer to lift an arm out of the water. The mechanical stress impinges the supraspinatus muscle between the head of the humerus and the middle/posterior aspects of the coracoacromial arch.

Swimmers will develop shoulder pain for many reasons. As seen with the first type of impingement, poor technique is a major factor. Over training, by doing too much too soon plays its part in the equation as well. As the muscles fatigue they work at a less efficient level, which causes the muscles to work harder in a weakened condition and perform more strokes to cover the same distance. It's a good idea to incorporate some backstroke into your warm-up and cool down to make use of the opposing muscles groups. This will help keep the shoulders back in a more neutral position by strengthening opposing muscles, and will help reduce the chance of an impingement from occurring.

The only way to determine which soft tissues are at fault is through 'feeling.' At Back To Health Wellness Centre the health practitioners have the palpation skills to identify the local adhesions for optimal treatment. Treatment modalities include chiropractic care, ART®

technique, massage, acupuncture, stretch, and strengthening programs.

If you have any further questions either about swimmer's shoulder or the services offered at Back To Health please don't hesitate to e-mail us at:

Dr.Rodwin@Back2Health4you.com ■

Our In-house Biofeedback Practitioner

As a first year NMSC member, it has been a pleasure to join in the workouts as well as the social aspect of the team. Becoming acquainted with my teammates and learning that we share many similar aspects of life including family responsibilities, occupations, and interests has been enjoyable. Unfortunately, another commonality that has surfaced are injuries. Not surprisingly, shoulder injuries and neck tension, which can result in headaches are often mentioned. When teaching patients how to manage their injuries, I use biofeedback equipment, which monitors and transforms physiological measures into simple auditory or visual information. Patients learn to independently control the physiology being measured. When working with muscular issues in particular, surface electromyography (sEMG) has proven to be an invaluable tool as the computerized feedback is instantaneous. Patients 'see' their muscle activity on screen and learn how to control maladaptive habits and facilitate efficiency. Surface EMG is frequently used to guide appropriate technique not only during exercise, but also at the workplace. With practise, this results in reduced pain and greater function. Other applications for biofeedback include, but are not limited to, stress and pain management, repetitive strain injury, migraines, and anxiety.

If there is enough interest, I could look into offering an educational in-service about surface EMG and common findings specifically with regard to shoulders, swimmers, exercise, and ergonomics. Those interested can e-mail me at ldusevic@rogers.com. Lesley Dusevic, S Group

Swimming to feel alive

Rick Taylor, B Group

In late May 2007 after my last B Group Masters chlorinated swim, I flew to England to do a bit of outdoor swimming with various eccentric writers for my new book *Water and Desire*. I'd already been swimming with Vicki Keith, and I became friends with Lynne Cox who wrote *Swimming to Antarctica*. In Key West I had an illicit swim in Hemingway's swimming pool. I'd been swimming in Walden Pond, five islands in the Caribbean, and in the South of France where Scott and Zelda Fitzgerald swam naked during the Roaring Twenties. But this year, I arrived in St. Ives Cornwall to swim to the Godrevy island lighthouse that had inspired Virginia Woolf's famous 1927 novel *To the Lighthouse*.

Before I entered the gonad-clutching water, I fluked my way into a private tour of Talland House, the rambling old mansion above the turquoise Cornish sea where Virginia Woolf spent her first 12 halcyon summers. From Portminster beach, just below Virginia's house, I dove into the bay and began an introspective freestyle and passed rental boats, crab trap markers, and fishing trawlers on my way to the lighthouse.

Next I took a 9 hour bus ride into London to swim the magical waters of the Hampstead Ponds with writers, actors, and painters. Next I jumped on a train to Swansea Wales, and met my wonderfully unhinged brother-in-law Vic who had a car and a big house above the sea. Each day I swam through the glassy swells of bays that sculpt this coastline, and one day I climbed the stone wall of Dylan Thomas' writing studio, The Boathouse, where he penned his most exquisitely tortured poems, and I breaststroked the murky estuary all the way to a Medieval castle.

After another train ride I ended up east of London in rural Suffolk at my friend Roger's moat-rimmed house, Walnut Tree Farm, which was built 20 years before Shakespeare was born. Some years ago in Australia, I had

met Roger Deakin who wrote *Waterlog: A Swimmer's Journey Through Britain*. The summer of 2006 I was supposed to visit him, but because my dad's Alzheimer's had taken a nasty turn, I didn't go, and in the interim, poor Roger died of a brain aneurysm. But this July I was invited to the Memorial for Roger at his house, and so I got to swim 30 laps of the famous moat Roger swam each day, and where he had embarked upon his epic swimming journey all over Britain.

*"The blood sings
and the water
yields."*
—From *Waterlog* by
Roger Deakon

South of London, in the village of Rodmell in Sussex, I wangled a private tour of Monk's House where Leonard and Virginia Woolf had lived, and I actually got inside her glassed-in writing studio. Then I met Tom, an actor and local open water swimmer I had been e-mailing. Tom introduced me to a pair of beautiful women who wanted to get in on my crazy swim. So the four of us barefooted from Monk's House, 20 minutes down to the infamous spot by the River Ouse where in the sad war time spring of 1941, Virginia Woolf had filled up her overcoat pockets with stones and drowned herself. Because of the scary dun-coloured water, only three of us entered the river, and swam a mile towards the Southeast bridge where Virginia's body had entangled. The Ouse is a tidal river with a ferocious current at the tide change. My charming actor friend Tom had figured it all out, and like clockwork the tide began taking us faster and faster. While we breaststroked with the flow, discussing silly and grave notions about Virginia, Tom warned us that if we didn't get out at the bridge, we might end up being taken out to sea all the way to France.

Eventually we scrambled out of the water from beneath a half dozen gnarly local fishermen who weren't too pleased about three psychotic swimmers bathing below their long fishing poles. But it was sunny and warm, birds singing, and a few other swimmers who had declined to do the swim met us with our clothes, and administered hot coffee from a big thermos. While we stood drinking coffee, the beautiful swimmer, Jo, who was so stoked

about doing the swim she had always wanted to do, bounded away from us, springing into six perfect cartwheels, which ended with a wild yelp for joy.

Back in London, again I arrived at the huge blue expanse of the nearly 100 metre outdoor Tooting Bec Lido, which is the biggest open air pool in Europe and attracts English Channel swimmers-in-training. I swam with my old eccentric friend Charles Sprawson who wrote the modern swimming classic, *Haunts of the Black Masseur: The Swimmer as Hero*. One of my favourite quotes from Charles' romantic book, which is about the peculiar psychology of the swimmer's feel for water is, "Much of a swimmer's training takes place inside his head, immersed as he is in a continuous dream of a world under water."

To finish my last day with a flourish, I squeamishly breaststroked the silt-laden Thames, from Vauxhall bridge to Lambeth bridge where the poet Lord Byron swam exactly two hundred years earlier in 1807.

In July and early August, to celebrate the 10th anniversary of living a year in a beach house in Australia ten years earlier with my wife and two daughters, I swam in the Coral Sea, and surfed my butt off in Lennox Head and Byron Bay where I had written my last book, *House Inside the Waves: Domesticity, Art and the Surfing Life*. Although there were too many swimming and surfing adventures to chronicle here (because you will have to read the book) I did take my Ottawa Technosport Masters swimming friends John and Karen March, who are on a 4 year posting in Oz, for harrowing surfs, and a 2 km open water freestyle, out smarting the sharks of Byron Bay.

Since returning from Oz, I've paddled the Rideau River on my Maddog surfboard behind our "Chlorine Chronicle" editor Carla who quite literally disappeared

ahead of me around a bend in the river as she expertly powered through the water on her paddleboard. I took a nostalgic flipturn-free dip with B Group swimmer and lane mate Ed Odecki at his house on the Rideau River, and one morning I swam open water up in a Gatineau lake with my lovely lane mates Paula and Lydia. I swam across the Ottawa River from our cottage in Norway Bay Quebec to the Ontario side. But among the many relaxed, long, soulful swims in Algonquin Park, and other Ontario and Quebec lakes, one of the most endorphin-pumping swims took place with my friend John March from Australia, who was visiting his son



Rick swimming at Byron Bay in Australia

here in Ottawa. Another elite triathlete friend, Pete the cop, who was doing a bike time trial in the "Gats" the next day, decided to be our drop off boy. He dumped John and me off at O'Brien beach on Meech Lake so we could swim 4 km to Blanchet beach at the far end of the lake. John, who is my age, recently held the Canadian Master's record for the 200 metre backstroke. When he

turns 55 this coming year he plans to break the world 200 metre butterfly record at the World Masters Swimming Championships in Sydney, Australia. But here up at Meech at the cold end of summer I wore my Orca wetsuit to give me a fighting chance with John who had left his wetsuit in Oz. A friendly swim soon escalated into a race. As we churned towards the far end of Meech Lake John drafted on me all the way like some crazed windmilling crocodile. And when we finally stroked into the lifeguard tower of the beach, our friend Pete stood there with a thermos of hot chocolate and cookies. Pete looked at his watch and shook his head in disbelief, "Fifty-four minutes," he yelled, "Whoo Ahhhh."

After the summer, my family had to put my poor dad in a nursing home, and so to help deal with the angst, I did over 20 solo open water swims at Meech during the fall.

I'd drive to O'Brien Beach, park my car, get into my wetsuit, hide the car keys, hot foot it down to the lake, swim 4 km in an hour to Blanchet Beach, scramble out, hitch hike back to my car, find the keys, get dressed, and drive like hell into Ottawa to teach a class at Carleton or Algonquin. My last 4 km open water swim was in the Ottawa River at my parents' cottage at Norway Bay.

Dad died in his sleep on Boxing Day, which was a blessing. At the beginning of my first B group workout of the New Year I felt like I was dragging my dead father behind me through the water. But by the end of Ben's long workout, I had regained that thrilling endorphin buzz. ■

Rick's been swimming in B group for 15 years. He has published a novel, collection of short stories, and an Australian travel memoir "House Inside the Waves: Domesticity, Art and the Surfing Life." Since 1995 when he was writer in residence, he's been teaching at Carleton University. He has also taught workshops in Australia, Tuscany, and Hong Kong. You can find some of his published work on water at www.taylorswave.ca. ■



Rick contemplates the surf at Byron Bay

"Swimming is a healthy, practical mode of transportation that can also be erotic, dangerous, relaxing, philosophical, religious and obsessive."

—From Rick's travel memoir in progress, *Water and Desire*.

NMSC 2008 AGM

It's important to mark your calendars for the 2008 Annual General Meeting. Your attendance is needed. You might remember that last year we had to reschedule because we didn't have enough club members present to meet Quorum. Without Quorum we cannot vote on very important items. Please make an effort to attend. Everyone is welcome to stay afterwards for the evening swim.

NMSC AGM

Wednesday, May 7, 2008

Walter Baker Sports Centre Library

7:00 p.m.

NMSC RECIPE CORNER

Alpine Chicken

Submitted by Carla St-Germain

This recipe is a quick-to-make winter comfort casserole. It's certainly not low in calories, but it freezes really well, and is a fabulous contribution to any potluck meal.

| | |
|---------|--------------------------------|
| 4 cups | cooked chicken (cubed) |
| 2 cups | celery, chopped |
| 2 cups | toasted <u>plain</u> croutons |
| 1 cup | Miracle Whip |
| 1/2 cup | milk |
| 1/4 cup | onion, diced |
| 1 tsp. | salt |
| 2 cups | Swiss cheese (1 250 g package) |
| 1/4 cup | toasted almonds |
| Pinch | pepper to taste |

Mix Miracle Whip, milk, salt and pepper in a small bowl. Mix everything else in a large casserole dish and then thoroughly mix in the "sauce" ingredients.

Bake covered at 350 degrees F for 40 minutes.

Diary of a rookie triathlete

Peggie Slavin, C and S

The following pieces are entries Peggie Slavin made to Tri-Rudy, an online triathlon group.

July 5, 2007: This is my rookie season as a triathlete and with three races under my belt I thought it was time I post a report sharing what I've learned.

In November 2006 a new triathlon event was announced—Ironman70.3 in Newfoundland. Right away I knew that's what I wanted to do. My friend Olivier asked me why I had decided to start with something long. I've never thought of myself as being fast. I'm not overly fond of lactic acid. I'm not a sprinter in the pool. I'm not a particularly fast runner. My strength, I've thought, is in going longer, in being fairly strong, and hanging in.

I come from a swimming background. In 2003, after turning 40 and losing 60 lbs I started to run with 1 minute run, 1 minute walk. Within 15 months I completed my first marathon. Biking is new to me. Of course I know how to "ride a bike," but the type of cycling you do in triathlon is very different and a whole new skill set. You need to be sharp and focused at all times—your safety and the safety of those around you depends on it. You need to learn how to handle the bike and use the gears to your advantage (I still have lots to learn here).

I decided to focus on several key components to prepare for the half-ironman. (1) No spring marathon—respect the challenge ahead and not deplete myself. (2) Sign up for several shorter triathlons to get some experience. (3) Do Rideau Lakes to get in some early cycling and some confidence in "going long." (4) Drop the 25 lbs I had regained since last year.

The Early Bird: For anyone out there contemplating getting into this sport, this is an awesome event to start with as it's totally rookie-friendly. I'd never raced my bike before; this was something totally new for me and I discovered it's a lot of fun. I got in most of my early bike mileage by commuting to work on my hybrid. When I took out my road bike on race day I felt like I was flying.

Lesson – Before your race you should create a video in your mind of your race. Picture yourself going through all the

phases of the event—from packing your gear to the finish. Come race day you can push play and you are ready to go.

Rideau Lakes: I logged about 1200 km before the tour, mostly by commuting to work with only three rides longer than 50 km under my belt. The big disappointment at RLCT was my husband (a.k.a. 'Crash Slavin') injured himself at Lake Placid and couldn't make the trip. We pulled together a group of 10-12 people loosely associated with NMSC and had a great ride.

Lesson – Day one I was very fussy about hydration and nutrition and felt great all the way. Day two I wasn't quite as fussy and went into a total bonk before Ashton. In any distance event, in any sport, fluid and nutrition are key. Keep on top of them or all the training in the world can go out the window.

Smith Falls: First group swim start. I had been training with a few friends who were not as relaxed in the water. I think if you aren't as strong a swimmer you need to work on your 'comfort' in open water. Don't worry about your pace, find comfort so that you can complete the swim with some confidence and reduced stress. The pace will follow.

Lesson – Don't take away your own confidence. As I mentioned I don't think of myself as a fast runner. When a friend of mine passed me halfway through the run I automatically told myself, "I'm not as fast as Judy" and let her go. Don't cheat yourself with self-imposed limits.

Tupper Lake 'Olympic' Distance: Olivier has stressed to us the importance of a warm up. I went in for a short swim before the start and felt great, got my confidence, and settled my nerves. This swim start was a wave of 180 swimmers. I started hard and wasn't caught in a pack, though I was a bit wide. Once I was clear I reminded myself to minimize my kick otherwise I'd just feel myself creating lactic acid with no real benefit to my swim. I had no idea what to expect on the bike. As Olivier said, "this is a technical bike course" (hilly and turns) and the run has its share of hills. I rode well, though I didn't 'hammer it' like in Smith Falls. When I headed into T2,

I knew that if I could hold my long slow distance (LSD) run pace I would meet my very loose time goal... I had a good run! A lot of my push in the run came from thoughts of my husband on the sideline. When I met up with Jeff and Oli at the finish they had good news and bad. I was the 10th woman to finish (out of 96) but our friend Colleen had an accident on her bike and had gone to the hospital. Unbelievably Colleen is okay, though she is no doubt disappointed about the day. We picked up her bike from the police and the frame was cracked almost completely across—amazing she didn't break anything. Her bike helmet was cracked in several spots and without a doubt saved her life.

Reminder from CSA – Bicycle helmets are designed to crush on impact. They act as shock absorbers, protecting our heads by cushioning impact. So, replace a helmet after it has been involved in a crash (even if you don't see any damage).

Lesson – Learn everything you can about an event beforehand. My husband and I did an easy ride on the course the day before, which paid off on race day. I had also checked out the tough part of the run course and knew what to expect and was prepared. Pre-race I had also thought about my mental limiters and was able to minimize them more at this race.

Reminder – If you find yourself injured, be patient. It's hard for sure, but there are many years of racing ahead of you.

Other lessons learned this season

Friends – The best part of this year in triathlon has been the friends. They make the training fun, they motivate you, they teach you, and they even cheer you on at your races. If you don't have 'training buddies' there are lots of places to make them. Join a master's swim program like NMSC. Join a clinic at the Running Room. Join the Ottawa Bicycle Club. Get out to events you see posted on Tri-Rudy. There are lots of opportunities to make friends—you just need to get out there and be friendly, positive, fun, and supportive!

Start of a Race – I like to start and finish every race day thankful that I have the motivation to get off my couch, challenge myself, and lead a healthy lifestyle. Everything else about the day is gravy.

Bikes – It can be totally intimidating as a rookie at a race like Tupper Lake when you see all the big name bikes. Last year we bought basic road bikes—nothing fancy or expensive. I have to say the bike has served me very well to date. I have a lot to learn about bike training, handling, and equipment. Before spending the big bucks, just get out there and train and learn. Once you know you are enjoying it and will stick to it and know what you like and need, then consider getting a better bike, but you don't need it to have fun.

Time Goals – Time goals can be motivating, challenging, and inspiring for sure. However, you really miss out on the bigger picture if you let it all be just about the time. Every race is a different day in one way or another and should end with something to celebrate, even if it's only a lesson learned.

Spouses – I have an amazing husband who is sadly still on the injury list. He has been a generous support to me this season and I really appreciate his enthusiasm and good nature. It's wonderful that we both enjoy doing all these crazy sports together, but it can be really hard when one of you is injured. I often say wedding vows should be rewritten to say, "In sickness and in health and through sports injury." If your spouse isn't into these crazy sports be sure to respect how much he or she gives just by graciously letting you go out and 'play' with all your sporty friends.

I started out thinking I wouldn't be very good at these shorter distance triathlons. Turns out I'm having a lot of fun at it and I need to remember not to 'limit' myself by what I think I can't do.

Thanks to Dr. Doug Bishop for his guidance in helping me lose weight while training—19 lbs down, 6 to go. For those of you that don't know Doug, he's an Ironman himself and has a weight management clinic. Men or women, he can show you the tools you need to reach your goals... of course the work is up to you, but very worthwhile.

Big thanks to all my friends. The races have been fun but you've made this a summer to remember!

November 10, 2007: It's a little surreal to be writing about attending the World Championships as my last report in my rookie triathlon season. Needless to say it's been quite a year!

The first triathlon I ever registered for was the Ironman 70.3 in Newfoundland July 2007. As part of my preparation I completed a few shorter triathlons and the Rideau Lakes Tour. I also worked with Dr. Doug Bishop to get rid of the 25 lbs (read as two jean sizes larger) I had regained over the past year (after working hard to lose 60 lbs in 2003). I had a fabulous race in Newfoundland and managed to place 3rd in my age group, which earned a qualifying spot at the 70.3 World Championships.

This is only the second year for the 70.3 World Championships. You can't simply open a box and create the mystique of events like Kona or Boston. Those events are steeped in history. Ironman did, however, put on a good show! On race day, the predawn sky was illuminated with spot lights and both dinners were held on the beach with tables set up for over 1500 people. John Blais' parents were at the expo to continue his campaign to raise awareness for ALS, and we joined in a cheer as John's ashes were spread over the gulf during the awards ceremony. There were also opportunities to chat with the pros—Robert McKeague, Sister Madonna Buder, and Team Hoyt.

As I understand, they've made a number of improvements over last year's event. The first step was increasing the number of swim waves for the age groupers from 4 to 10. This was great for me in the water as my wave was 150 women between 35-44. The two waves behind me were 40-44 year old men and 18-25 year old boys. I'm a strong enough swimmer that I wasn't taken over by any packs in the water—the bike course was another story.

The bike course, in a word was scary. This is an urban setting. Imagine racing your bike down the right lane of Merivale Road on a Saturday morning while frustrated shoppers are in the middle lanes trying to get about their day. The course was a single lane, often with bad conditions on the right side due to storm drains, repaired pavement, etc. We raced over at least four sets of train tracks with water bottles that had bounced out of holders littering the road. Although the athletes briefing indicated they would be very strict about drafting, I was passed close to ten times by packs of cyclists—not single file

cyclists but packs. When the course was out of the commercial areas we had two lanes of fast moving traffic on our right hand side separated only by traffic cones. There was only one stretch where you didn't need to worry about cars as we had the entire southbound bridge over Tampa Bay. For those of you who like to look at splits, pretty much everyone saw their third bike split pace drop off significantly. This was due to the strong headwind as we turned and headed back towards the coast. I give the organizers credit—they had lots of police and volunteers along the bike course but this didn't prevent cars from crossing the bike lane.



Peggie and husband Jeff "Crash" Slavin
in Clearwater

Although the Gulf had been very rough for the practice swim on Thursday, the water was very calm on race morning. I had a good swim taking almost two minutes off my Newfoundland time. All of my earlier races were on my old K2 bike, which as it turns out was too big for me. This was the first time racing on my new Argon 18 Radon from The Cyclery. I picked up the new bike late August. Aerobars were new to me and I didn't get enough practice on them to be comfortable handling the bike, so I opted to take them off for Clearwater. I figured I had raced all season without aerobars and they would be something to learn for next year. The bike was fabulous and I took 20 minutes off my Newfoundland time.

The run, well it wasn't a great run and I certainly had trained to run much faster. By the time I was running it was the heat of the day and I had adopted the attitude I was at World's and was going to enjoy the ride, so I didn't push through on the run. I still managed a personal best by 9 minutes on my total time and I achieved my primary goal—not to be last in my age group!

So I did the typical post-race week and was totally lazy, ate some junk food, read a book, ignored my home computer and any form of commitment... then I noticed Sears had a sale on Levis jeans. My size 8 jeans were feeling a little loose... I decided to take a chance and see if by any chance I could finally fit into a size 6. I've never owned a size 6 of anything. Well move over 70.3 World Championship Finishing Medal there's a new kid in town—I now own a pair of size 6 Levis. Now that's the best finish to a great season! ■

The adventures of NMSC triathletes

Olivier Mouyau, D and S Groups, NMSC Triathlete Rep

Forgive me for the Belgian caveman English. I'm sure Carla has done anything she can, but I'm sure it's a challenge to tweak my French/Dutch mixture into an understandable English.

So who are these triathletes of NMSC ?

In the fall of 2007, the NMSC executive organized a one-day strategic planning meeting. An invitation to participate was extended to non-executive club members. The goal was to redefine the "mission statement" of the club and also take a look at the future. I decided to volunteer to attend.

During that day-long meeting, the word "triathlon" was mentioned probably as much as the word "swimming." As a result, it was suggested that a triathlete representative be invited to the executive meetings. In recognition of the growing number of triathletes joining the NMSC membership, it was determined that the club could explore offering some special training sessions geared for triathlon training. And this is how it all started...

Shortly after this meeting a survey was put together to try to get a sense of what was needed. Since then Olivier Mouyau (triathlon rep) has been organizing activities for the triathletes of NMSC, mainly during the spring and summer.

We have created a warm and welcoming atmosphere around the triathlon theme. We're all members and swimmers of NMSC and that's what put us together. But it does not matter if you're fast, slow, not so slow or not so fast... all are welcome to join us.

The triathletes of NMSC inaugural season brought numerous successes, including:

- Participation in over 100 of triathlons
- At least 5 Ironman finishers
- 15 to 20 half Ironman finishers
- One member (Peggie Slavin) qualified for the worlds half IM in Clearwater, Florida)
- Several rookie triathletes competed in their first race

and went on to do more

- A few bought their first racing bicycle
- 20 to 25 quality group run workouts involving track, tempo run, and hill training were organized in the Barrhaven area
- Numerous group riding sessions were held in Barrhaven and Gatineau
- One training camp long weekend in Lake Placid
- Open water swims at Meech Lake on a regular basis during the summer months.
- Three specials swim sessions at the pool for triathlon swimming (thanks coach Ben)
- The design and purchase of a triathlon team outfit
- A spring aquathlon (800 m swim + 5 km run) organized by coach Steve
- The addition of a Triathletes link on the club Web site (www.nmsc.org).
- The creation of a Google group for NMSC triathletes

Not bad for our first year!

This was our first year and the group was (and still is) really alive thanks to the members! And this only takes into account the activities that Olivier is aware of. Many athletes of NMSC have competed in other sporting events, such as running marathons and other running races, dragon boat, city chase events, Winterlude triathlons, provincial and national swim meets, etc.

Many were beginners and have used the energy from the group to become a bit more confirmed athletes. Others were doing their first attempt at longer distances and also had lots of success.

And then we had the crashes!

Miriam Nicholson tried her riding skills during a rainy ride crossing a wet train track at a 45 degree angle and it did not go well.

Jeff Slavin crashed during our training camp in Lake Placid and suffered a severe shoulder injury.

Do you remember the movie "Unbreakable" ? Well one of member has that power... Colleen Cameron had a really

bad crash during her first half ironman attempt, but thankfully did not suffer any major injuries.

Tracey Graham also tried the train track crossing trick without success.

As we say in French, “c’est ainsi que le métier rentre!” (Sometimes that’s how you learn the trade.)

Looking forward, we’re keen to do it all over again. Close to 20 of us have already marked our agendas for the brand new half ironman in Muskoka in September 2008. Meanwhile, I’m sure our members have lots of other goals along the way.

So triathletes, welcome to this wonderful swim club at NMSC and don’t hesitate to come discover our triathlon program.

So, how do you join?

There is no need for registration and there is no extra fee. This program runs on a voluntary basis. When the weather cooperates (bring on spring!), we try to meet once a week for a quality group run. This could be a track workout, tempo run, or hills. Our meeting point is always somewhere in the Barrhaven area. Runners of all levels are welcome. We also organize a weekly evening bike ride, approximately 1h to 1h30 in length starting from Barrhaven and going to the south along nice flat and almost traffic-free routes.

For more information, watch our Web site or contact Olivier Mouyau at triathlete_be@hotmail.com. ■

“I like to start and finish every race day thankful that I have the motivation to get off my couch, challenge myself, and lead a healthy lifestyle. Everything else about the day is gravy.”

—Peggie Slavin



Some NMSC Triathletes pose in their new triathlon suits.

Pictured in the photo are (L-R): Gerald Leahy, Miriam Nicholson, Pasan Fernando, Peggie Slavin, Mike Christie, and Olivier Mouyau

2008 Nepean Masters Swim Meet

The 2008 Nepean Masters Long Course Swim Meet held in memory of Doug Petty was a huge success. NMSC had many swimmers participate in their first ever swim meet. Congratulations to all the rookies who took their first plunge.

In all, we had 152 swimmers from 19 masters clubs participating, including 34 Aurora Master Ducks that boarded a bus for the trip to Ottawa.

It appears there were several records set, but we are still in the process of confirming them. Of particular note was 95 year old Eugene Lehman's 50 m butterfly race. What an inspiration!

Special thanks to Robinson's Independent Grocer for the contribution of food to the social, the students for the massage therapy, and the Nepean Kanata Barracudas for their technical expertise and use of their equipment.

A big thank you to the organizing committee:

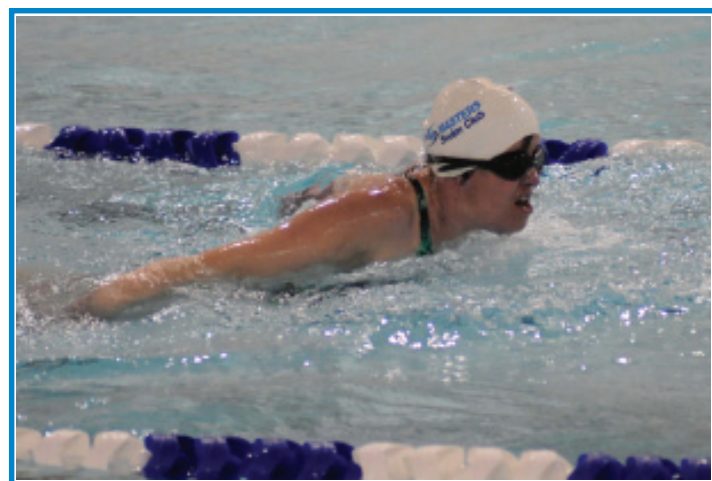
- *Derek Parker, Meet manager*
- *Angela Scavone, Meet invitation packages*
- *Paul Carrière, Translation*
- *Mike Sweny, Officials coordinator*
- *Brian Wolfe, Volunteer coordinator*
- *Louise Desjardins, Meet registrar*
- *Trevor Holt, Webmaster*
- *Erik Valk, Software management*
- *Tina Nadeau, Data input and certificates*
- *Lydia Rogers-Stewart, Food and social*
- *Steve Bloom, Shirts for officials and timers*
- *Charlie Colpitts, Records verification*
- *Ed Odecki, Miscellaneous*

And finally, special thanks to our officials as without them we could not run our meet:

- *Jenny McKay, Meet referee*
- *Kevin Cockell, Starter*
- *Murray Hatt, Chief timer*
- *Michel deGrace, Chief finish judge*
- *Art McCreedy, Ted Hayes, and Kenny Adams, Stroke and turn judges*
- *Our numerous volunteer timers*



Volunteer timers hard at work



Janet Manuel (A Group) swims 100 m butterfly



Mike Sweny mockingly tells Cathy Merritt that she's been disqualified for catching him and then beating him in the final leg of the 4 x 50 m mixed free relay.

How to become an official

Kevin Cockell, B Group, Swim Ontario Level IV Official

Next season NMSC is hosting the Ontario Masters Championships. Some of us are already planning which events we want to swim, and plotting out a training strategy accordingly. Others will pass blithely from week to week, enjoying the social and fitness aspects of our chosen activity, only to be convinced at the last minute by coaches or teammates to give it a try. And others will prefer to answer the call for volunteers. So just how many volunteers does it take to run a swim meet anyway?

It's worth pointing out that swim officials, unlike those in many other sports, are all volunteers. They play a critical role in providing swimmers with the opportunity to race and to know their results (and rankings, for those for whom this is important!). Swim officials in Canada are generally expected to dress in white, though exceptions may be made for volunteer timers at non-championship meets like our annual Long Course Meet (formerly called Winterlude).

So, if you don't want to make the step to the starting block, consider becoming an official. What follows is a breakdown of the various officials required to run a swim meet.

First and foremost (chronologically, at least) are the **Meet Manager** and the **Meet Referee**. These two officials start months ahead of time to undertake the planning and organization, delegating where they can, to ultimately oversee the running of a successful meet. While the Meet Manager role can be filled by an enthusiastic organizer with good delegation skills, the Meet Referee requires more specialized training (more about that later). These two officials apply for sanctioning of the meet, so that the results can be deemed official and therefore records will count. They decide which events to include, arrange for facility rental, advertise the meet to other clubs, and organize the rest of the volunteer crew.

The call for volunteers within the club usually focuses on **Timers**. These are the front line folks responsible for the seemingly simple but absolutely critical task of accurately working a stopwatch to provide the information that every competing swimmer most wants to know—"how

fast did I go?". Yes, there are electronic timing systems in use at most meets, but just imagine what it would be like to put everything you had into your best race, only to be told that, because of a computer crash, you would have to do it again... The manual stopwatch is an essential backup to prevent just such a scenario. Because of variability in human response times, the fairest way to obtain manual times is to have three stopwatch times for each swimmer. In some pools, one or more of the three timers per lane may be assigned to work with a "semi-automated" timing system, by pressing a plunger when the swimmer finishes, which was started automatically with the electronic timing system at the beginning of the race.

As a backup to the backup, the **Chief Timer** oversees and is responsible for all of the timers. There may also be an **Assistant Chief Timer** to help in this role. These two will generally hang around behind the timers at the finish end of the pool, stopwatch in hand, and troubleshoot. They may take the finish time of the race winner, check individual timers' watches from time to time for quality control, fill in wherever a timer has inadvertently missed a start or had trouble with a stopwatch, and generally make sure this aspect of the meet runs smoothly.

Several other officials' roles require more specialized training. **Judges of Stroke** and **Inspectors of Turns** (or Stroke and Turn officials) must be knowledgeable about the detailed technical requirements of each stroke. They are assigned to watch during each race to ensure that no swimmer gains an unfair advantage over the other competitors through the use of improper stroke or turn techniques. At a minimum, one Stroke and Turn official is assigned to monitor each two lanes at each end of the pool. For a seven lane meet like Winterlude, this means at least six to eight Stroke and Turn officials are required. At championship meets, there may be one Stroke and Turn official at each end of each lane, plus one or two walking along each side of the pool, focusing mainly on stroke technique in the middle portion of the pool, while those at the ends focus on appropriate execution of turns.

If a Stroke and Turn official observes the use of improper or unfair technique within the area of the pool that they've been assigned to monitor, they will disqualify ("DQ") the swimmer from that race.

The **Chief Finish Judge** is responsible for taking the results of the electronic timing system, any semi-automated times, and the stopwatch times for each swimmer in each race, and determining the official times (and order of finish) for each swim. The judge's approved results are then passed to the **Recorder-Scorer** who enters them into the computer and prints a copy of the results for posting, so that the swimmers can find out how they've done.

The use of an electronic timing system assumes the presence of Electronics Operators, who keep the electronics system operating efficiently to get finish times (and splits, where appropriate). These individuals may be overseen by a **Chief Judge Electronics**, particularly if meet management plans to hand out medals and awards in "real time" immediately following each event. And, although Masters swimmers generally manage to find their assigned heat and lane by themselves, at larger meets there may be a **Clerk of Course**, who helps to keep this aspect of the meet organized.

Of course, in order for there to be a race, there has to be a start. The **Starter** and the **Session Referee** work together, typically from opposite sides at the start end of the pool, to keep the meet moving along. The Referee indicates readiness for the start of a race by blowing a whistle, at which point the swimmers take up their starting position on the blocks, or in the water in the case of a backstroke start. Once the swimmers are in position, the Referee raises an arm to point along the pool, signaling to the Starter that everything is ready. The Starter instructs the swimmers to "Take your marks," pauses briefly, and then activates the starting signal (electronic beep or starter's pistol). Both the Starter and the Referee observe the start process to ensure that no swimmer gains an unfair advantage by starting ahead of the signal ("False start"). Once the race is fairly underway, the Starter or the Session Referee may assist the Stroke and Turn officials at the start end of the pool, if needed.

In addition to working with the Starter to maintain the smooth progression of heats and events in the meet, the

Session Referee is the senior official on deck, in charge of all the other officials working during that meet (or that session of the meet if it is a multi-session meet). Because of this, a swim official can only progress to the responsibility of refereeing after completing training in every other role.

Which brings us back to the issue of training, alluded to earlier. Swim Canada, Swim Ontario, and the Ontario Swim Officials Association run a program of training sessions and mentoring. These programs ensure that volunteer swim officials are properly trained and available to allow swim meets to happen and run as fairly as possible for all of the participants. The system involves five levels of training and certification. **Level I** officials are Timers, who have completed the Timers' training clinic, and successfully participated in timing two meet sessions "on deck." **Level II** officials acquire more specialized expertise by gaining experience in theory and practice of two of the Level II/III positions. These include:

- Stroke and Turn
- Chief Timer
- Chief Finish Judge
- Chief Judge Electronics
- Clerk of Course
- Recorder-Scorer
- Starter
- Meet Manager

Level III officials have obtained certification in at least four additional Level II/III positions, taken the Referee's clinic, and have conducted a Level I clinic. Any official acting as a Referee during a session is required to have a minimum of Level III certification. To be a Meet Referee (and eligible to complete the application for sanctioning of a swim meet in Ontario) requires completion of certification to Level IV.

Level IV officials have fully completed certification in all Level II/III positions, gained experience as a session Referee, continued participation in mentoring by conducting at least two Level II/III clinics, and passed two formal practical evaluations in the position of Session Referee.

Level V officials have further enhanced their expertise through continued practical training and experience at National level meets. They have also passed more stringent practical evaluations as Referees or Starters. NMSC is very fortunate to have two such dedicated individuals in its membership at the present time—Mike Sweny and Peggy Baxter.

So in answer to the original question, to run even a fairly small 7-lane swim meet like Winterlude takes 21 Timers, 6-8 Stroke and Turn officials, 8-10 officials in more senior roles, plus registration and hospitality for a total of about 50 volunteers. To run a championship meet, multiply that by the number of sessions (up to 12!).

If any or all of the foregoing has caught your interest, and you think you might like to get involved in officiating above the level of clicking a stopwatch, let Mike or Peggy (or myself) know, and we can provide more information on how to proceed. Local age-group swim clubs run clinics from time to time, and would be delighted to see new faces eager to take up the challenge. If there's enough interest, NMSC could even organize its own training sessions.

See you at the pool! ■



Barry Doucette and Carla St-Germain are racing it out to be the first to reach the 1 million metre mark. At the time of print both have passed the 960,000 m mark. Nathalie Bélair Jones is not far behind with over 930,000 metres clocked to date.

MILLION METRE CHALLENGE

In 2005 Masters Swimming Canada launched the Million Metre Challenge. This program is designed to promote swimming for health and fitness.

Registered swimmers record the distance swum in each workout. The system tracks the swimmer's overall progress and calculates various statistics. Awards are given when a swimmer reaches a milestone distance as outlined on the Million Metre Challenge Home Page.

A number of NMSC swimmers have registered and are tracking their mileage. To register, go to the main page, <http://mymsc.ca/Million.jsp>, select **My MSC**, and then select **Register**. Note that the user name you enter is the one displayed on the Million Metre Challenge Home and records pages.

What follows is a sampling of NMSC achievements to date:

750,000 m

Barry Doucette

Carla St-Germain

Nathalie Bélair Jones

Steve Bloom

500,000 m

Brigitte Zirger

Ross Brown

Janet Manuel

250,000 m

Steve Marsh

Warren Hulme

Janet Manuel

Deana Schildkraut

TriGuyOttawa (?)

“Much of a swimmer’s training takes place inside his head, immersed as he is in a continuous dream of a world under water.”

—Charles Sprawson

Tony's City Chase Adventures

Tony Woods, C Group

Last fall I had the opportunity to participate in a race that is half Amazing Race, half Survivor, but all Canadian. The race is called City Chase (www.citychase.ca) and I would recommend it to anyone who has the opportunity to give it a try.

My brother and I, in a team of two, had to win a regional race to make it to the National finals. We ran last June in Toronto and managed to pull off the victory. We had to wait all summer, but September 15-16, 2007 we finally got our chance to compete at the Nationals in Huntsville (host city for the year). The finals had seven teams (Ottawa, Toronto, Montreal, Vancouver, Calgary, Edmonton, and Regina) and the winners of the race would get a pair of new Mitsubishi cars and a trip to the World Championship in Rome!

The race at the finals level runs like a two day Amazing Race on steroids. Instead of doing one or two activities in a day, it is non-stop challenges.

We started in downtown Toronto the evening before the race and the first challenge was a timed event. After checking in we were brought to a mystery location, which ended up being the Emergency Training Centre for the fire department. We were timed on a race through a crawl space/tunnel system in the dark. The challenge took about six minutes of crawling through dark tunnels while feeling all the walls for the next direction you needed to head in.

Day One

After sleeping on cots inside the training centre, the placings on the tunnel race determined our start times the next morning. The first challenge was to gear up in head-to-toe fire gear and put out a car fire (30+ foot flames) under the careful supervision of the fire department. Once complete, we headed out to a photo hunt in which we had

to take pictures and hand them in Collingwood (we had at this point been given cars—Mitsubishi of course—for the race). For this race you only have the shirt on your back and your running shoes, so the majority of these photos required a fair amount of negotiating! I think the woman

at the Burger King where we took the fast food restaurant photo still thinks I'm insane. We had to take eight photos from the following list:

- Photo in a bubble bath with at least one candle lit
- A photo in someone's backyard inside an erected tent
- Coins dated from 1970 to 1999 (you can miss 5 years)
- Sitting at a slot machine
- Naked in a backyard pool
- Milking a cow (yes I said milking a cow) (1 of 3 we didn't do)
- Behind the counter at a fast food restaurant, in uniform, serving a customer
- On a hospital gurney (1 of 3 we didn't do)
- On a double bicycle
- Getting a manicure
- An eleventh one that I can't remember (1 of the 3 we didn't do)



Tony and Erik doing the climb of death

We actually got a lot of these photos done at once thanks to the kind natured woman we met in the middle of the countryside near Barrie. By "met" of course I mean we walked up, rang her doorbell and kindly asked if she wouldn't mind if we jumped naked into her pool.

Once completed, we checked in our photos (on a Palm Trio we were assigned) and went to the caves at the foot of Blue Mountain. We ran around the area for a little bit doing a short ropes course (and zip line) and searching the caves for a series of clues. Completing the puzzle, we ran from there down to Blue Mountain village to complete a few challenges. The first was to memorize a series of drink recipes and successfully make a randomly selected martini. It took us four tries and we weren't allowed to drink it after (something about drinking and driving!). The second

challenge was to find five people to skip rope for a full minute for us (without mistake). This actually took us a long time—a lot of people would make it to 30 to 40 seconds and miss a jump. Finally having found our fifth person (the gondola operator at the foot of the mountain), we did the last event, which was to cross a small lake in a standing kayak.

At this point we are at about 2 p.m. in the day after a 6 a.m. wake up call and a terrible sleep in the middle of the training centre. The next challenge was awesome... We checked into a local spa and had to run through a hot pool, cold pool medley. We couldn't do it quickly (because we were given timed periods in each pool) so it was sweeeeeet mid-race. It also helped me avoid a little friend of mine I like to call the "Chafe Monster" (thank goodness for some personal hygiene).

Muscles a little relaxed, we had to do two final challenges in the Wasaga area before driving up to Huntsville for the end of day one. The first half of the challenge was to replace 10 batteries in fire alarms in homes around the community. We of course immediately started the door to door campaign (it was harder than we thought thanks to a local fire department that spends time visiting homes to tell them to replace their batteries). The second was to check into Wasaga Paintball for a target range competition. If you missed you had to search the grounds for flags that you could trade in for more ammunition, which was easy as long as another team wasn't busy trying to shoot their targets while you were in the field dodging bullets!

The next challenge, and last one for the day, was another photo hunt. Again we had to do it while making our way in the cars up to Huntsville. Photos included:

- Business cards with first or last names with the first letter with words from A to Z (can miss three letters) (1 of 3 we didn't do)
- 5 different out of province license plates (1 of 3 we didn't do)
- In someone's backyard cooking actual food on a BBQ
- Riding a horse
- In a dentist chair
- On a functional chairlift (remember we were in Collingwood—lots of ski resorts around) (1 of 3 that we didn't do)
- A blister on your index finger (took 30 minutes of rubbing my finger against a rough object to get this

one)

- In handcuffs being arrested by a police officer
- In a functional car wash (sprayers working but no car)
- Behind the steering wheel of an 18 wheeler
- Posing with manikins in the window of a retail store (with at least three manikins)

Erik and I got most of these done in Gravenhurst on the way up to Huntsville. My wrists were bruised for quite sometime thanks to an overzealous cop (who was howling when we told him what we wanted). The car wash was also an experience—guess who was sporting that "new car" smell for the rest of the weekend?

At the end of the first day, checking into our hotel in Huntsville, my brother and I were first, two minutes ahead of Team Regina. The next closest team was 3 hours back, so it had become a two horse race.

Day Two

Waking up for our 6 a.m. start time, with Team Regina starting at 6:02, we received our first clue and had to find a lookout point over Lake Muskoka (Lion's Lookout). Once there, we had to split up and each complete a task. I had to build a Muskoka chair while my brother had to do a painted replica of a Tom Tompson painting. The tasks took about 30 minutes to complete and we received our next clue—off to Pioneer Village with Team Regina still even with us.

Pioneer Village was split into three tasks that we needed to complete to receive the next clue. The first task involved taking a pump rail car about half a kilometre and back—probably one of the funniest and craziest experiences I've had in some time. After that we had to use historical tools to make 50 cedar shakes to be used on a roof in the village. They may not make them like they used to, but these tools were really difficult to use. Thank goodness my brother was there so we could trade off duties when our hands became too sore to continue. For the final task we had to go into the old blacksmith and create our own brand from an iron rod in the shape of the City Chase logo. We had to put the rod in the fire to warm it, and then hammer it into shape (it required about 15 repeats to complete). This last experience would not have been complete without the character who was the blacksmith (you would swear they time warped this guy from the pioneer days).

We completed the task quickly again, as did Regina, and headed to our next event. We arrived at Fish Lake and had to canoe across to a marked landing. Once there we had to find the top of a cliff by moving through the woods and repelling down a 200 foot rock face. The task was easy to complete, but navigating the woods was rough and took us some time without any assistance to find the top of the rock face.

The next challenge in the sequence took place at Camp Outreach. It was probably the most physically demanding challenge. At the camp we had to complete a vertical ladder challenge. This was a total nightmare for two guys with a combined weight of 400 pounds plus. The rungs got progressively farther apart and were so wobbly. The key (which is why it is a team building exercise) is that you can't

possibly climb it alone. In the end, Erik and I found a technique that was not graceful and rather painful at points, but ultimately successful. On the higher rungs I would literally step on Erik and hurl a leg over the upper rung. The key here again is that it was so wobbly that we had to do it in one clean motion or we both fell. When I arrived at the upper rung, I also had to find a way to stand up. Again Erik offered me a hand from the lower rung to help me steady myself, but it was still very ugly. Finally once standing, I then gave Erik one hand (with the rest of my body trying desperately not to fall by pushing between the two rungs) to help him get up. The experience took about 8 minutes and severely damaged one of Erik's ribs, but we made it.

Completing that task led us back to downtown Huntsville for the task that would ultimately put us 5 minutes behind Regina for the rest of the race. First we had to build a go cart from scratch (we were provided with the materials). We excelled at this event and actually finished it before Team Regina, but we weren't as quick in the next phase of the challenge. The second part was to sell the cart and the painting from the morning to raise \$250 for Terry Fox charities. Obviously the combined sale did not yield

\$250, so it became an effort of power fundraising. On a hunch, Team Regina brought along their replica painting that we had to do in an earlier challenge. This was our key mistake as we did not bring our painting with us. It was in the car some distance away. The five plus minutes it took us to go get it cost us the whole race and after all that, we didn't even manage to sell the painting.

We raised the money and were off to the next challenge, now trailing the Regina team by about 5 minutes. The first stop was at a honey farm where we moved bee hives from one location to another to harvest the honey. Although this challenge went by quickly, it was something I'll always remember (bees were climbing all over me). After we completed this, we needed to do a quick waterskiing session behind a jet ski (Erik drove, I skied) and finally swim across the



Tony's fundraising adventures

middle of town (Huntsville) with one person in a bathtub while the other pulled from in the water. I thought I had the hard part of this event—towing—but apparently bathtubs are not made to double as boats and Erik spent a lot of energy trying not to tip. With this last event complete, we finished the race and were reunited with the champion Regina boys.

For second place we won a \$1,000 gift certificate for Merrill footwear and clothing. Despite the loss, the experience was awesome and the time bounding with my brother unforgettable. ■

Will you be there?

2008 Ontario Provincial Championships
Toronto, March 28-30

2008 National Masters Swimming
Championships

Quebec City, May 16-19

Good luck to all our swimmers participating
in these meets.

Last but not least...

Hot off the press...

Coach Shelley Demkiw and Carla St-Germain competed in Toronto March 8-9 in the 2008 Canadian Lifesaving Championships. Their team, St. Laurent Lifesaving, composed of swimmers from NMSC, Technosport, and the Canadian Forces are the 2008 Canadian Lifesaving Champions. Next stop Rescue 2008, the World Lifesaving Championships in Germany this July.

Just Married



Congratulations to coach Steve Papai and his bride Lisa Lezack who tied the knot in September 2007. Steve and Lisa have just returned from their honeymoon trip to New Zealand. Thanks coach Ben for holding the A Group fort in Steve's absence.

"Swimming: From the outside looking in, you can't understand it. From the inside looking out, you can't explain it."

—Author unknown

Did you know that we have an Olympian swimming with us?

Alison Korn won a silver medal in Women's Eights (rowing) at the 1996 Atlanta Summer Olympic Games and a bronze medal at the 2000 Sydney Summer Games. Alison started swimming after retiring from rowing. She is now a sports writer with the Toronto Sun, the mom of three-year-old twins, and as of this season a regular swimming in C group. Welcome to NMSC Alison. We look forward to having you on our dragon boat team, and don't forget to bring your medals to our next girls' dinner.

Our Canadian Record Holder



Cathy Merritt of A Group currently holds 10 Canadian Masters Records the women's 55-59 age group (sorry to divulge that info Cathy!).

Cathy is Canada's fastest woman in 50 m free (short course), 100 m free (short course and long course), 200 m free (short course and long course), 100 m backstroke (short course), 50 m butterfly (short course and long course), and 100 m IM (short course and long course). Great swimming Cathy!



Coaches Pat, Shelley, Steve, and Bill at the November NMSC fun meet. The next fun meet is tentatively scheduled for Friday, April 11 and hosted by B group.