

2016 Open Water Swim Season Summary

Delia G. Perez – Open Water Representative
Delaware Valley Local Masters Swim Committee

The 2016 open water season offered more than 70 open water swims at the shore and nearby states. Unfortunately, Atlantic City, New Jersey, is undergoing a financial crisis and our beloved Yates Swim and the Pageant Swim were initially cancelled this season. In an attempt to save the historic Pageant Swim, the oldest and longest running swim in the nation, a combination of USA Swimming and other organizers were able to “save” the Pageant Swim. In a compromise with Atlantic City officials, the swim was no longer scheduled for the Saturday morning in Labor Day Weekend but moved ahead to the weekend before Labor Day on August 27th 2016. Additional compromises included the change to swim with the current, change the course route, and shorten the swim to one mile instead of the historic one-and-a-half mile Pageant Ocean Swim.

According to Diane McMannus and John Kenney, Founder and Owner of **French Creek Racing** just completed their 4th full season of race events in the Delaware Valley. The French Creek Triathlon and ToughKids Philly events were a huge success and held on May 22nd and 21st respectively, with over 300 participants combined. Their open water series drew folks from all around the region. The 2016 race dates included: May 10th, June 9th, July 19th, August 16th and September 6th 2016. Each race had a distance of a 800 meter swim and the last two (2) events were held at their new location - 1 West Indian Lane, Eagleville, PA. As usual, they finished off the events with a backyard BBQ style cookout. Race series winners were Laurie Hug and Sean Reynolds. New in 2016 was their inaugural River Day, featuring 1 mile and 5K swims in conjunction with the Port Indian Civic and Boating Association. Swimmers were also treated to a water ski show after the swim. Their 4th annual Fountain of Youth Meet was a fun family day and the kids’ team finished first and triumphed over the adults in a closely contested matchup. They held their 4th annual Aquathlon on August 28th consisting of a 1000 meter swim and 5k run at the Upper Merion Township Swimming Pool.

Their 2nd annual Valley Forge Marathon Swim was held on September 2nd and included 10 swimmers (including relays) who completed the 8-mile swim to the Norristown Dam in Valley Forge National Historic Park and back. They continue to offer more training but no additional competitions in 2016. They’ll start 2017 with their Austin Tri-Camp and begin their 2017 open water series race on Tuesday, May 10th 2017, followed by ToughKids Philly on May 20th and the French Creek Triathlon on May 21st 2017.

May 29th 2016 offered good season opener swims with the very competitive 60th Annual Navesink Swims (1.2 or 2.4 miles) in the Navesink River with tri-athletes heavily represented.

June 5th 2016 and the informal Donny Fund Swim (pick your own distance) held in Pleasantville, New Jersey, is a fundraiser for children with cancer. This informal swim allows athletes to enjoy a training swim on their own while supporting a worthy cause with a hot breakfast at the Pleasantville Yacht Club.



The 5Ds at the finish line the day before the Great Chesapeake Bay Swim –
 (left to right) Dave Hirsh (Cape May CH, NJ), Doug Bergen (Ocean City, NJ), Dave English (Philadelphia, PA), Delia Perez (National Park, NJ), and Doug Frohock (Mamora, NJ).



Start of the Great Chesapeake Bay Swim

June 12th 2016 resulted in a very hot and humid day with temperatures in the mid-90s and water temperatures between 74 degrees in the mid-channel and 78 degrees in the shallow areas near the start and finish. Overall, the swimming conditions were good for the annual Great Chesapeake Bay Swims (1 or 4.4 miles) finishing nearby Hemmingway's restaurant in Maryland. The One Mile Bay Swim starts and ends at the finish line for the 4.4 Mile Bay Swim and conditions varied for both swims. The One Mile Swim course directed swimmers into the wind for the first leg of choppy water plus exhaust fumes from safety boats. Then the second leg turns sideways to the wind and then turn into the final leg with the wind at our backs. Because the One Mile Swim course is held in more shallow water, the water

temperature hovered between 76 and 80 degrees, and wetsuit swimmers were dehydrated or overheated by the time they turned into the final leg of the course.

(June 13th 2016 edition of the *Capital Gazette*): Bill Braswell is 71 years old and has completed the Great Chesapeake Bay Swim 24 times. "When you get old, you get kind of set in your ways," he said at the swim Sunday. Not that age has slowed him down. "Look at all those green caps I beat," said Braswell, of Arlington, Virginia.

The annual fundraising event is an open water challenge in which 650 athletes — in yellow and green swim caps — swim 4.4 miles under the Bay Bridge, from Sandy Point State Park in Annapolis to a small beach on Kent Island. The event in its current incarnation was established 24 years ago. It started as a solo swim in 1982 by Brian Earley, who was fundraising for the American Diabetes Association in honor of his late father. "It's honoring the people that get you here — your parents, your brothers, your sisters," said Earley, 55. "And it's about the benefit that comes from it."

The swim raised more than \$200,000 this year for March of Dimes, a nonprofit that works with mothers and babies and other charities, said race director Chuck Nabit. Since the event officially started in 1992, about \$2 million has been raised for charitable organizations, event organizers said. About 60 percent of each donation goes directly to charity, organizers said. The remaining money is used for the administrative costs of the event, like T-shirts and a party for the over 500 volunteers, as well as awards for swimming participants. Swimmers who churned through the water on Sunday said it was choppy than in past years. Kayakers and jet skis followed the swimmers for safety. Wind speeds hovered around 22 mph around noon and peaked at 33 mph before 4 p.m., said National Weather Service meteorologist Dan Hofmann. Air temperature stayed around 88 degrees during the day. With the gusting wind, the swimmers seemed to be moving faster than the traffic above them on the Bay Bridge.

Bill Fallon, of Warren, New Jersey, arrived on land after 1 p.m. with his 13-year-old son, whose eyes were red from the suction of the goggles he wore. Other family members were still swimming to shore. "It's a family affair," said Fallon, 53. Fallon, who has participated in the race for several years, said his time last year was one hour and 36 minutes. This year took one hour and 29 minutes. "Stroke to stroke, it's harder," he said. "But it's a lot faster with the wind at your back. That was a big aid."

As the swimmers stripped off their wetsuits at the finish line, they were met with cheers. When Debbie Dawson, 48, was told she was the first woman out of the water, she wasn't sure they were serious. "Shut up!" she said in disbelief to volunteers. Dawson has participated for the past two years in part to bond with friends, but relationships are formed in the water, too. When she got to the finish line, she hugged the man who'd been at her side — but she didn't know his name. "We were swimming together and looking out for each other," said Dawson, who lives in Baltimore. "It was awesome."

Bill Shipp, 56, wore bathing suit briefs that featured a print of the Maryland flag. The Mitchellville resident said it was his 10th Great Chesapeake Bay Swim with the Arundel Breakfast Club "It's our big swim of the year," he said.

Rose Kehoe, 49, has done the race 21 times. "I'm glad I'm out," she said. "It was kind of rough at the end." The Arlington, Virginia, resident said it helps to focus "At times you're having fun," she said. "And at times you really have to keep a positive mental attitude."

Approximately 325 swimmers (as compared to 440 swimmers in 2014 and 353 in 2015) completed the 2015 One Mile Bay Challenge Swim. The 4.4 Mile Swim offered a consistently warm (74 to 78 degree) water temperatures throughout most of the course. Approximately 615 swimmers completed the 4.4 Great Chesapeake Bay Swim. Race results for the last five years indicate that between 79 and 97 percent of swimmers finished the Great Chesapeake Bay Swim. The lowest completion rate of the race occurred in 1991 and 1992, when a strong ebb current in the main channel beneath the Bay Bridge led to fewer than 20 percent of swimmers finishing the event. Results can be found at www.linmark.com



Swimmers in the Great Chesapeake Bay Swim cross the finish line.



Bill Braswell completes the Great Chesapeake Bay Swim for the 24th time.

June 12th 2016 and the Escape the Cape Triathlon includes a swim from the Cape May Ferry. The race director, Steve DelMonte, DelmoSports, Inc., permits 1750 participants to either swim & bike or swim & run, in lieu of completing the full triathlon. Unfortunately, this is the fourth year that Steve has scheduled the event for the same day as the annual Great Chesapeake Bay Swim. For results www.DelMoSports.com

June 24^h and July 1st 2016 – Due to thunderstorms and unsettled weather, both the initial evening swims and the July 1st rain date for the rescheduled swims resulted in cancelling both dates for the half mile swim and the one mile Independence Day Swims in Beesley's Point, New Jersey (at the sea-doo beach location across from the Tuckahoe Inn. Race director, Liz Casey, directs swimmers to a box course out towards the bridge, then turn towards the "cooling tower" at the power plant, turn again towards the start and finish back at the starting point on the beach for the half mile swim. The One Mile Swim required two loops around the course. Due to either strong incoming and outgoing tides, the race organizers selected a "box course" in an attempt to minimize swimming against the tides. Unfortunately, the Independence Day Swims were not successfully rescheduled for the 2016 Open Water Season. Results found at www.lmsports.com

June 25th and the 2016 Bridge-to-Bridge Swims in the back bay of Atlantic City were held in warm water (mid-70s) on a sunny afternoon with an air temperature hovering around 80 degrees. There was a little bit of a tidal pull on an outgoing tide for the 2K Swim. The 5K swim started before the 2K Swim and followed the traditional out-and-back course just shy of

the Dorset Avenue Bridge and back to the Atlantic City Crew Boathouse. USA swimming rules dictate that swimmers cannot wear jewelry (except a wedding ring) or watches – and finger nails must be trimmed near the fingertip – otherwise, nails were cut on the spot by race officials. The 2K race follows an out-and-back course toward Fenton Island and the Atlantic City Expressway and back (even though one never really sees Fenton Island).

The 5K Swim was started on time and the first leg of the swim towards the Dorset Street Bridge seemed to be with a slack tide and somewhat choppy water with the wind at our backs. After the turn just before the Dorset Street Bridge, we realized that we were swimming into an incoming tide. Unfortunately, this year USA Swimming race officials enforced the 90-minute limit for completing the 5K Swim – and they pulled the remaining few swimmers from the course to start the 2K Swim without allowing a handful of the older masters-aged swimmers another five or ten minutes to finish. It was very disheartening to these swimmers who could see the finish line but weren't allowed to swim to the finish. One such swimmer was swimming to raise funds from sponsors who would make donations after he completed his swim – instead he was very upset when he was pulled from the water.

After talking with the USA Swimming race officials, they plan to make some changes to this swim that will accommodate the older masters-aged swimmers who are not as fast as swimmers who are 40 and 50 years younger. For next year, they are considering an earlier start for the masters-aged swimmers in the 5K Swim and then starting the remaining younger swimmers behind these older swimmers. The Bridge-to-Bridge has become a USA Swimming event, populated with a lot of speedy young folk, and not too many of the older masters-aged swimmers. In the 2K Swim, there were 67 female swimmers aged 11 to 24 years and only 4 females aged 25 years and older. Also in the 2K Swim, there were 50 male swimmers aged 11 to 24 years and only 7 males aged 25 years and older. Results are available at (www.swimpva.org).

Race Director, Dimitar Petrov, has sanctioned the Bridge-to-Bridge Swims with USA Swimming to attract more young pool swimmers and for this reason, he schedules the event based on the Middle Atlantic long course pool schedule. Historically, the Bridge-to-Bridge Swim was dominated by masters-aged swimmers but now the event is predominately populated by youth swim teams. The swim is now a Middle Atlantic Open Water Championship and is scheduled so as not to conflict with the Middle Atlantic schedule. The swims are now usually scheduled the morning after the evening Independence Day Bay Swim because this is the only weekend without a pool meet. Due to the prolonged winter and cold water in the beginning of June, the race director scheduled the swims at the end of June after many youth teams expressed their concerns about swimming in cold water.

July 10th 2016 – 8th Annual Steelman Open Water 1.5 & 3 Mile Swims held at Nockamixon State Park in Quakertown, PA. The Steelman Open Water Swims (1.5 mile and 5K) were held early morning on July 10. According to Christine Schroeder, the weather was beautiful and the water temperature was comfortable, and the event was well organized as usual. The race draws a large crowd of swimmers, from young teenagers to a range of masters, all of whom seem to enjoy the music, food, prizes, and laid-back atmosphere

Germantown Academy Masters makes this swim their primary team open-water event. Age group award winners from the Delaware Valley Masters included: 1.5 Mile Swim - Hannah

Plimpton (3rd in her age group), Rick Heimann (3rd), Barbara Burke (3rd), Sue Watts (1st), Mari Schaefer (3rd), and Chris Schroeder (2nd). In the 5K Swim, Laurie Hug was the 2nd overall female finisher with Vikye Swanson (1st in her age group), Stephanie Saucy (2nd), Barney Heller (1st) and John Culhane (3rd). Find results at (www.steelmantriathlon.com).



Start of the 3rd Annual Sea Isle City Beach Patrol One Mile Ocean Swim

July 23rd 2016 and the 3rd Annual Sea Isle City Beach Patrol One Mile Ocean Swim was held in Sea Isle City, New Jersey. This swim went on hiatus almost 23 years ago when it was last held in extremely cold water conditions. The ocean water was comfortably warm prior to the "frigid swim" but the day of the swim, the water temperature dipped into the mid-60s with the west winds pushing the warm water out to sea and causing the cold water to surface along the coast. At the start of the swim, the ocean water continued to chill and unbeknownst to anyone, the temperature had dipped to a very cold 54 degrees. Most open water swimmers didn't use wetsuits and were ready to tough out the chilly water conditions – but no one knew just how cold the ocean water temperature had become throughout the afternoon. By the end of that historic frigid swim, 6 or 7 swimmers were taken to a local hospital and other swimmers were brought to the Sea Isle Beach Patrol to thaw out. That's when the SIBP decided to abandon their ocean swim indefinitely – they didn't need these liability problems.

The 3rd Annual SICBP One Mile Ocean Swim is unfortunately scheduled at 11 a.m. on a Saturday morning. The timing of the swim coincides with shore rental turnovers and parking in Sea Isle City is difficult at best. This year, the almost 100-degree sunny weather felt like a "desert walking" between the hike to park and walking the boardwalk to the start of the swim. If you arrived at check-in area on time, perhaps you were lucky enough to hitch a ride on a school bus to the start of the swim. But the ocean temperature was in sharp contrast to

the beach temperature with a 62 degree ocean water temperature. The SICBP was not prepared to shorten the course because of the cold water temperatures and allowed swimmers to wear wetsuits or make the decision to swim back to shore if a swimmer was too cold to stay in the swim.

This year, the swim attracted 175 swimmers and awards are provided for varying age groups (14 & younger, age 15 to 18, 19 to 25, 26 to 35, 36 to 45, 46 to 55, 56 to 65, and 66 & older). The usual 5-year groups are limited to the younger swimmers and unfortunately, the older masters level swimmers were limited to strange 10-year clusters. Hopefully, they'll improve the award criteria in time for future swims and consider using the Ocean City Masters Swim age group award criteria. The first overall winner of the SCIBP One Mile Ocean Swim and first male swimmer was 43-year-old, Billy Auty (Wildwood, NJ), who finished in 21:58 minutes. The first female swimmer who finished 8th overall was 14-year-old Kristen Gullickson (Staten Island, NY).



Start of the Ocean City Masters Swim: First Wave of Male Swimmers

July 30^h 2016 and the 37th Annual Ocean City Masters Swim continues to schedule this one mile ocean swim at 10 a.m. after changing from its original evening venue five years ago – annoying those of us who don't like morning swims! When the swim was held in the evening, participation surpassed more than 400 swimmers. The 74-degree ocean water offered a negligible north-bound current that slightly "rocked and rolled" the 203 swimmers towards the finish. Results can be found at www.lmsports.com



Maggie Wallace



Brendan McHugh



Shelah, Delia and Linda

3rd Place winner Shelagh Bradley (West Chester, PA), 2nd Place Delia Perez (National Park, NJ), and 1st Place Linda Hoke (Philadelphia, PA) display their hardware in their age group finish in the Annual Masters Swim. The two fastest and much younger swimmers in the T. John Carey One-Mile Master's Swim were separated by different heats, but only by one second in their times. Brendan McHugh, 26, of Sicklerville, a 2008 St. Augustine College Prep swimmer who also swam for the University of Pennsylvania and professionally, won the annual Master's Swim with a time of 16:51, only weeks after finishing eighth and ninth in two events at the U.S. Olympic tryouts.

McHugh didn't make the Olympic team despite being one of the fastest breaststrokers in the nation, but he was a full 50 seconds ahead of the Master's Swim defending champion, Ocean City Beach Patrol lifeguard Quinn Cassidy. Cassidy finished with a time of 17:41, the morning after winning the swim at Friday evening's Dutch Hoffman Memorial Lifeguard Races in Wildwood.

Starting at the 42nd Street beach and finishing at the 34th Street beach, the surprise of the morning swim was Maggie Wallace, 10 years younger and a far sight smaller than the strapping Olympic hopeful, McHugh. Wallace, an Ocean City resident who is going into her junior year at Ocean City High School, won the women's title by swimming nearly a full minute faster than defending champion Hayley Edwards, 25, who had won seven titles in a row stretching back to 2009 when she was 17. Wallace finished in 16:52; Edwards was second among the women in 17:50.

The 16-year-old beat the defending champ by about a minute, but was only one second behind McHugh's time. Wallace swims for the OCHS girls swim team that won its first-ever state championship this past winner and for a club team, the EHT Seahawks. Despite the size and decade age difference, the two new Master's Swim champs have one thing in common: they are not really acquainted with ocean swimming.

McHugh had done an ocean swim in high school, but not since then. His strategy was "to go hard in the beginning because I knew if I went out fast I'd be hard to catch." The former Hermit swam the 100 and 200 breaststroke in the Olympic trials. "I wanted to make the team, obviously, but I came up a little short," he said. He finished eighth in the 200

breaststroke and ninth in the 100 breaststroke, putting him among the elite in the nation, but not quite fast enough for a spot on the U.S. team. "It was a great experience," McHugh said. He also tried out for the Olympics in 2012.

After Penn, he swam professionally while going to law school for three years, before graduating last May. Then he took a year off and just swam while preparing for the Olympic trials. He'll begin work as a lawyer in September. Since the trials ended about a month ago, he has been keeping in shape, but hasn't formally trained. "It's different," McHugh said about swimming in the ocean. "It's nice that it was calm. That helped me because I didn't have to adjust as much. I only looked up about every 20 strokes or so and just went for it. It was so flat out there that I would adjust my path only once between each buoy. It was easy to swim straight." For the record, breaststroke is McHugh's main stroke, but in college his third event was the freestyle.

Wallace is a distance swimmer, specializing in the 1500 and 800 meter freestyle. She only tried the Master's Swim once before, but it didn't work out too well. Wallace was about to attempt the Master's Swim when she was 10 years old, but the water was too cold "so I ran out screaming," she laughed. "This is my first time actually swimming it." Fortunately, the water was warm this time around. "It was really nice conditions. "I really just wanted to swim fast and have a nice race," Wallace said. "This was more of a training thing for me." She agreed the conditions in the ocean were "pretty clean. I was surprised, actually. There were not a lot of waves and that is what I like," she said. "There was no current either so it was good."

Wallace did not know she was leading the second heat. "I passed a couple of girls but I didn't know for sure," she said. "I saw some people up there but I couldn't see what kind of cap they had on so I wasn't sure." The first heat wore red caps and the second heat wore yellow caps. When she saw she was catching up to swimmers in red caps, "I was like, 'wow, OK.'" That meant she was making up the roughly 10-minute gap between the heats. "I was thinking, is that a red cap? Gosh, I must be going pretty fast. It felt pretty cool." Before the race, she added, "My friends were saying, 'I bet you can't catch me because I'm in the first heat,' but I said, 'I bet I can.'" With a finish like this, will she be competing in the ocean again? "Absolutely and my coach wants me to do more ocean swims. I'm looking to do a 10K next summer," she said.

Masters aged swimmers held their own in the Ocean City Master's Swim. Ron Marks (Marmora, NJ) at 57 years of age was the first male masters-aged swimmer finishing 11th overall in 19:08 minutes, just 2 minutes and 15 seconds behind McHugh and Wallace. Victoria Bahr (Houston, TX) at 37 years of age was the first masters-aged female swimmer finishing 22nd overall in 20:52 minutes. And Susan Reich (Ocean City, NJ) at 57 years of age continues to amaze us by finishing 26th overall in 21:06 minutes.



2016 Pier-to-Pier Challenge "Golden Arch" Finish Line



Billy Auty

July 30th 2016 and the 2nd Annual Pier to Pier Challenge kicked off Saturday July 30th at 6:30pm. Ocean conditions were a little choppy with the currents pulling south to north. One of the few remaining evening swims, the course is in the form of two apex triangles, each a half mile, with swimmers exiting and re-entering the ocean to swim the second half of the course. The swimmers follow an "M" shaped course, that brings the swimmers back through the surf and actually on to dry sand at the half way point. The unique course allows competitors to come in through the surf twice throughout the course. Body surfing skills and navigation expertise were also needed to negotiate the course. This is the only swim in the South Jersey area that has this unique spectator friendly course. The race for first place came down to less than one second, with Wildwood Rookie Lifeguard Mike Sauer out running Wildwood Crest Rookie Lifeguard John Burkett to the finish line. The winning time was 17:36. The overall female winner was Ocean City Beach Patrol Lifeguard Lexi Santer. This year, there were 94 swimmers participating and the Pier to Pier Challenge overall Male and Female Champions were awarded a free entry into the upcoming Escape From Lewes Swim on October 1, 2016 by DelMoSports. The Pier to Pier Challenge has age groups ranging from 10 and under to 60 plus. Race Director, Billy Auty and the swim organizers are looking forward to bigger and better things for 2017.

July 30th 2016 – 2016 USMS 10 Mile National Championship Swim at Lake Memphremagog in Newport, Vermont. The Kingdom Swim and Aquafest is a true celebration of open water swimming in the heart of the summer in the heart of the Northeast Kingdom of Vermont. They host the 2016 USMS 10 Mile National Championships and the WOWSA World 10 Mile Open Water Championship in a world class venue with world class accommodations. In addition to the Championship, Kingdom Swim is a competitive and recreational swim for all open water skill levels, young and old alike, now offering distances of 15 miles, 10 miles, 6 miles, 3 miles, 1 mile, 1/4 mile and 100 yards. With four divisions, Skins, Wet Suit, Adaptive, and Canine. Laurie Hug won the women's division of the USMS 10 mile open water national championship in 4 hours & 25 minutes. She placed 5th overall and was only about 15 minutes behind the men's first place finisher. According to Christine Schroder, Laurie was awesome, and Sandy Kerr was her kayaker. Nancy Stedman Martin of Garden State Masters was 2nd woman to finish the 10 mile swim. The venue offered beautiful weather and good water conditions, and

is located just a few miles from Canada. Swim organizers took everyone on boat tour of the course with a pasta party the day before and a lunch plus beer garden after race.



August 6th 2016 and the 32nd Annual Mid Summer Lavallette Ocean Swim was held at 8 a.m. that morning. After a mile walk down the beach, the USA swimmers start first at 8 a.m. for the 11 to 18 year old swimmers – for the 1.2 Mile New Jersey Open Water Championship for young USA swimmers. The swim no longer offers a USMS division and is now limited to just two divisions for open championship and USA swimmers. And at 8:20 a.m., the One Mile Open Championship started and there is also a wetsuit division. Warm ocean temperatures (72°) and calm conditions welcomed swimmers as they swam with a slight northbound current along the course. At the finish, it is usually difficult getting out of the surf onto the beach due to the extreme slope filled with soft sand (plus tiny pebbles and broken shells) and swimmers fall without getting a solid footing to climb onto the beach. There were only 88 swimmers participating this year. Swimmers can enjoy muffins and crumb cake and other goodies while waiting for the results of the swim. The Mid Summer Lavallette Ocean Swim results are available at (www.jchipusa.com/results).

August 6th 2016 and the 45th Annual Yates Swim historically held in Atlantic City, New Jersey was cancelled by the Atlantic City Beach Patrol (ACBP) due to a lack of resources to manage the swim. Back in March 2015, the Atlantic City Council instituted a restrictive plan for the ACBP eliminating the position of chief and one assistant chief and three members of the boathouse staff. These cutbacks contributed to relocating the Yates Swim to States Avenue while the swim was held in the morning without having to incur any overtime pay for the ACBP if the swim was held in the evening. Given the current dire economic situation in Atlantic City, the city council could care less about hosting open water swimming. We'll have to wait and see what happens to the future of open water swimming in Atlantic City.

August 13th 2016 and the USMS 3-6 Mile Open Water Swim Championships (5K) that were scheduled to be held in Lake Lure, North Carolina, were cancelled due to 90-degree water. Ray Peden (Wilmington, Delaware), a retired Delaware State Trooper who works as a lifeguard for Rehobeth Beach, Delaware, registered for this USMS Championship Swim and trained for the event but was disappointed the swim had to be cancelled due to the extremely warm lake water temperature.



August 13th 2016 – 3rd Annual Brigantine Beach Annual Ocean Swims and these swims have limited swimmer participation. Robin Taylor serves as the race director and also runs the Green Heads swim program in Brigantine, New Jersey. The two ocean swim venues – 800 meter and a 2K Swim – are advertised as “with the current” courses in the ocean. The 2K Swim had 51 (aged 25 years or younger) swimmers (as compared to 43 participants in 2015) and 33 masters-aged swimmers (as compared with 16 participants in 2015). And the 800 meter swim included 5 young swimmers. These swims are USA swimming events and governed by USA swimming rules. Search for results at 2016 Brigantine Ocean Swims. Due to the ocean conditions, the swim was relocated to the Back Bay in Brigantine. The water was very warm with temperatures in the low 80s. The swim started at low tide near the 26th Street Dock swimming north to 15th Street and returning south against a strong wind and current. Big orange balls marked the course and provided good sighting conditions.



Doug Farrell – Longport Beach Patrol Honorary Chief

August 14th 2016 and the Captain Turner Ocean Swim was held at 9 a.m. in Longport, NJ. Doug Farrell is a long time Longport resident and an avid ocean swimmer. In 2006 he was diagnosed with Multiple Myeloma. In 2014 he approached the Longport Beach Patrol about the possibility of using the annual Captain Turner Ocean Swim to raise funds and awareness of blood cancers. The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society (LLS) is the world's largest voluntary health organization dedicated to funding bloodcancer research, education and patient services. LLS's mission is to cure leukemia, lymphoma, Hodgkin's disease and myeloma, and to improve the quality of life of patients and their families. Special thanks to Doug Farrell, JJ Walsh, Colleen Wynne, and the entire Longport Beach Patrol for the success of the swim.

Almost 150 swimmers participated in the ½ mile swim and 20 children, less than 12 years of age, participated in the 200 meter surf dash event. It was a beautiful morning and a beautiful ocean with a south to north current, one to two foot waves, and 69-degree ocean water temperature. Results are available by contacting the Longport Beach Patrol. Major

benefactors of the Captain Turner Swim received commemorative hand-crafted pottery plates depicting a swimmer in the ocean. The event raised over \$22,000 for the Leukemia Lymphoma Foundation and the International Myeloma Foundation. The organizers strongly emphasized that this was a community event and not just a swim race. Equally important to their fundraising efforts was the awareness that such an event brings to the local community. Almost everyone knows someone with cancer and people want to help and the Captain Turner Swim is now an event allowing others to support a worthy cause to research and cure blood cancers. The Longport Beach Patrol made race director, Doug Farrell, an honorary chief in the Longport Beach Patrol. Doug has been swimming at the Longport beach for over 30 years and expressed his gratitude to the LBP for their support of the foundation's mission. He said the LBP "is like my family and I'm just so proud to be a friend of theirs."



Start of the 2016 Pageant Swim



Officials at the 87th Pageant

August 27th 2016 – and the recently reconstituted 87th Annual Pageant Swim was held in Atlantic City. After the Atlantic City Beach Patrol cancelled the swim indefinitely this season due to the lack of resources to manage the swim, the East Coast C-Cerpants along with other volunteers plus sanctioning from USA Swimming saved this historic swim. Concessions were made to the Atlantic City local government including moving the date of the swim to the Saturday morning before Labor Day weekend, changing the location of the swim further south, modifying the direction of the swim course based on the prevailing current, and shortening the distance from 1½ Miles to just a 1 Mile Ocean Swim for 103 swimmers.

The water temperature was 68 degrees and according to Richard Wallace (age 68 – Englishtown, NJ), "it was low tide and the ocean had a fairly gentle swell, so you could walk out past the break before going horizontal into swim mode. The first buoy (yellow) was set at Michigan Avenue and further out than the pier to prevent swimmers from cutting the turn buoy and swimming directly for the Pier. It was followed by a red flag marker before you even reached the Ocean One Pier with all the shops on it (directly across from an entrance to Caesar's). We swam about 100 to 150 yards out beyond the end of that pier. There was wind that prevented using an overhead drone monitor the race but not enough to cause any annoying chop or spray throughout the duration of the race. There were numerous additional red flags, so the course was extremely well marked and they were easily visible because the ocean was so cooperative. My time leads me to believe the race was actually longer than a mile but probably not by much. We were so far out that in turning the last (and second yellow buoy) to swim back to shore and finish, I could not clearly see where I

should swim to finish on the beach. The entire beachfront at that time of day was fairly crowded and differentiating the race types from the sun crowd was impossible until about $\frac{3}{4}$ quarters of the way back to shore. As we approached the shore line, there were 6 (six) volunteers wearing lime green vests to direct swimmers toward the finish line."

Noteworthy swimmers known to the Delaware Valley Local Masters Swimming Committee include Laurie Hug (age 51) finishing 9th overall in 21:37 minutes; Vibeke Swanson (age 54) 19th overall in 24:05 minutes; Maureen Kilgariff (age 58) 60th overall in 29:47 minutes; Richard Wallace (age 68) 64th overall in 30:53 minutes; Mari Schaeffer (age 61) 77th overall in 34:35 minutes; David English (age 65) 81st overall in 36:02 minutes; Molly Williamson (age 60) 83rd overall in 36:11 minutes; Kathryn Pramuk (age 59) 87th in 38:06 minutes; and Doug Farrell (age 65) 97th overall in 42:26 minutes.

August 28th 2016 – Brigantine Bayfest One Mile Swim in the Back Bay in Brigantine, NJ, is sponsored by the Brigantine Elks Club and was held at 9 a.m. that morning. Jim Waddington (58 years of age with a summer home in Brigantine, NJ) reported perfect conditions for the swim. The water temperature was approximately 75 degrees and mostly flat conditions. The tide was going out as the swimmers swam to the turn buoy and then everyone swam against the current to return and finish at the dock. It was a beautiful and perfect morning for a swim and Jim was happy with his 6th overall finish. Jack Martin (age 64 – Abescon, NJ) did well with his 7th overall finish after recuperating the past two seasons from heart-related problems. The swim attracted approximately 60 to 70 swimmers – a lot of kids plus a woman's tri-athlete club. For results contact John Livezey at deliver10@aol.com



Midge Kerr (left) Race Director



August 28th 2016 and the 7th Annual 5K Cedar Island Swim in Avalon, New Jersey, treated 156 swimmers to an enjoyable swim around Cedar Island in 76 to 78 degree water. The Cedar Island 5K Swim has become my personal favorite these days especially since the Yates Swim is no longer an inlet swim with the incoming tide where the race finished in Gardner's Basin in Atlantic City. Today's conditions were almost perfect and there wasn't too much choppy water on the first leg of the course south along the marsh before turning left into the residential area for the rest of the "box" course. And of course, the swimmers wearing a wetsuit had faster times. I stopped at the champagne boat and enjoyed two big sips from a fluted "glass" before heading down the last leg of the course. Along the course, there is a boat along a dock that offers champagne to the swimmers. If you see the boat, then stop long enough for a toast and continue swimming to the finish back at the Avalon Yacht Club.

Since the informal inception of the swim as a challenge among friends in 2009, race director, Midge Kerr, offers this "champagne toast" as a very inventive way to celebrate the swim while refreshing the palate from all the salty water. It was very pleasant swimming with 156 swimmers strung out along the course and on such a beautiful day, we were all just living the dream!! This year, the after swim refreshments included a variety of chilled healthy water selections (such as Vitamin Water and Core Hydration) plus pizza from Tonios. For the first time this year, chip timing was used for the swimmers and the results will eventually be posted on the Kerr Charities website at <http://www.sitiming.com/Cedarswim16.html>. Thankfully, the Kerr Charities fundraising swim for Wounded Warriors (specially selected by Tim & Midge Kerr) is more like an informal training event with prizes awarded to just the top five overall male and female swimmers, grand masters, and top three (first to sip) champagne winners. Amanda Nunan (age 17 – Egg Harbor Twp, NJ), who recently made it to the Olympic swimming trails, finished 1st overall and 1st female in 50:18 minutes. Right behind her, John Humenick (age 41 – Fort Lauderdale, FL) finished 2nd overall and 1st male in 50:19 minutes.

But yesterday's swim was not completely without drama. A swimmer suffered a heart attack and passed away. "Stephen Anderer (age 52 – Wynnewood, PA), my cousin and great friend passed away during the Cedar Island Swim. We were doing the race for a second time and it was an event we looked forward too. Stephen was an excellent swimmer who participated in many Triathlons, swims and races in the last 10 years. He is survived by his wife Susan and 3 daughters. I just wanted to write and thank all of you for the prayers and support. More importantly, we truly appreciate each and everyone of the volunteers, swimmers, staff, medical, fire and police personnel who did all they could for Stephen yesterday. Thank you, Will Mullin"

"I wanted to add that all of you are such a special group of people, caring and compassionate. Everyone was looking after each other yesterday and I cannot thank those of you that helped Stephen enough. You guys are incredible and selfless, and offered immediate assistance and worked tirelessly as a group together in this emergency. Stephen did not suffer or panic. He was never conscious or afraid. And he was never alone. We all thank you from the bottom of our hearts. With Gratitude – Midge"

September 24th 2016 marked the final local swim for the 2016 Open Water Season with the September Splash (1 and 2 Mile Swims plus a quarter-mile swim) held in Wildwood Crest, New Jersey. It was an overcast morning with 74-degree water, extremely blustery winds from the northeast (gusting between 9 and 19 mph) and incredibly choppy water conditions. Instead of the usual box-course in Sunset Lake, someone advised the race director to adopt a "straight-line" course instead of the usual box course. Unfortunately, the swim organizers have no appreciation for actual open water swim conditions and at the very least, the course should have been patterned either as an extended "diamond" or "oval" shape to prevent swimmers going off course and swimming directly into each other. The result was chaos driven by the windy and choppy course conditions. For the 2-Mile Swim, the 56 participants swam directly into the wind and waves, had difficulty sighting the northbound course, and after rounding the first turn around the north buoy, swimmers began swimming into each other because they just couldn't sight well enough to avoid swimmers crossing the course line whether they were swimming north or south. The southbound line of swimming was

somewhat easier because swimmers could “surf swim” to complete the first of four (4) laps around the straight line swim course. Having completed the first lap around for the 2-Mile Swim, fairly rational and intelligent participants had to convince themselves that it was OK to consider fully committing themselves to the three (3) remaining laps to complete the 2 miles in the back bay course. Wearing a sleeveless wetsuit provided extra warmth but ultimately, it was a disadvantage because the buoyancy kept me high in the water. The unrelenting wind and chop created a sensation of swimming with a constant “Neti Pot” irrigating our sinuses throughout our 2-Mile Swim. Wearing my wetsuit for the swim kept me warm but ultimately, it was a huge disadvantage because with the buoyancy, the high winds tossed me around on top of the choppy waves and pushed me off course throughout the swim – resulting in swimming a much longer course to finish.

With its 8:45 a.m. start, participants in the 2-Mile Swim had the disadvantage of swimming at low-tide (9:15 a.m.) and having to negotiate rocks, broken glass and shells, and other debris that have historically cut swimmers feet during their entry and exit from the water. For the 11 a.m. start of the 1-Mile Swim, participants had less of a challenge with about two hours of an incoming tide and with the higher water level, managed better entering and exiting the water due to the higher tide conditions. Many swimmers have slipped on the rocks after finishing the swim and this is a serious safety problem that has yet to be corrected! Even with a concrete entrance stairway into the water, the base of the stairway and area where swimmers need to walk over on their way to the start of the race is not free of debris and swimmers continue to cut their feet.

There were 56 swimmers who finished the 2-Mile Swim as compared with 50 swimmers in 2015 and 69 swimmers in 2014. Overall, swim times were much slower this year due to the swim conditions – the top three male swimmers: Robert Moran age 28 from Ocean City finished in 49:37 minutes; Rob Montgomery age 48 from Philadelphia finished in 49:54 minutes; and Garr Kerr age 52 from Cape May finished in 51:40 – as compared to the top three young (16 and 15 years of age) male swimmers finishing in less than 32 minutes (31:30 to 34:25 minutes) in the 2015 2-Mile Swim – more than 18 minutes slower. In the 2013 2-Mile Swim, the first place winner finished in 25:51 minutes, and the 2014 2-Mile Swim first place winner finished in 31:27 minutes – almost 6 minutes slower. Overall, there were 124 swimmers who finished the 1-Mile Swim as compared to 131 swimmers in 2015 and 173 swimmers in 2014. And swim times were also much slower for the 1-Mile Swim – the top three male swimmers: Rob Montgomery age 48 from Philadelphia finished in 23:01 minutes; Aaron Buzdygon age 17 from Wilmington finished in 23:13 minutes; and Garrett Burk age 15 finished in 25:37 minutes. The 2015 top finishing times for the first three swimmers were (17:35 – 17:52 – 18:18 minutes) as compared to the top 2014 finishing times (16:00 – 16:02 – 16:04 minutes). In the 2013 1-Mile Swim, the first place male swimmer finished in 14:47 minutes, the 2014 first place male swimmer finished in 16 minutes, and the 2015 first place male swimmer finished in 17:35 due to the ever changing open water conditions swimmers experience each year.

October 1st 2016 and the Escape the Cape Open Water Classic: 3 and 1 Swims are sanctioned by United States Masters Swimming and the World Open Water Swimming Association were cancelled again this year due to the windy and choppy conditions caused by another Nor’easter storm hindering the event being held in Lewes, Delaware.

This is the second year in a row that Steve DelMonte had to cancel his swim event located in Lewes, Delaware. It was scheduled for Saturday October 1st 2016, allowing swimmers to participate in either the 5K (priced at \$179 for 2015 and \$79 for 2017) or one mile (priced at \$119 for 2015 and \$59 for 2017) swims that begin by jumping off a Cape May-Lewes ferry boat in Lewes Harbor – next scheduled for September 30th 2017.

The 2016 Open Water Season gave us comfortable ocean temperatures with calm and rough seas, along with a variety of swimming venues. Traditionally popular swims, such as the Brigantine Bayfest, Ocean City, Yates, and the Captain Turner swims were all evening swims. Within the last few years, these swims were rescheduled to the morning and attract fewer swimmers than in previous years. Perhaps this is the direct result of scheduling triathlon events early in the morning or diminishing sponsorships for the swims as well as the increasing number of new swimming venues available within our local area that is luring swimmers from the historically long-standing swims at the South Jersey shore. As a testament to these traditions, the Pageant Swim celebrated its 87th anniversary as the oldest open water swim in the country. This year, the East Coast C-Cerpants rescued the Pageant Swim after the Atlantic City Beach Patrol could no longer assign limited resources to manage this historic swim and USA Swimming sanctioned the Pageant Swim. Concessions were made to Atlantic City local government resulting in moving the location of the swim, modifying the swim course based on the prevailing current, and also shortening the course from 1½ Miles to a 1 Mile Ocean Swim.

Finally, here's a teachable moment for us all to consider. According to Kelly Annie, jewelry designer with her own "perfectly imperfect collection" of handcrafted jewelry with soul, her "keep on swimming" bracelet inspires us – "Life can be as hard to live as swimming against the tide. But at the worst of times, if you will just remember to keep swimming, sooner or later you will develop the ability to swim through life like a fish through the ocean."

"To me the sea is like a person – like a child I've known a long time. It sounds crazy, I know, but when I swim in the sea I talk to it. I never feel alone when I'm out there." ~ Gertrude Ederle ~

Delia G. Perez
Delaware Valley United States Masters Swimming
Open Water Representative

2nd October 2016

