

2021 Open Water Swim Season Summary

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

The 2021 open water season decided it was “open for business again” following the Corona Virus Pandemic cancellation of most open water swims last year.

May 16th 2021 and the Steelman Racing Open Water Classic at Marsh Creek State Park in Pennsylvania. Initially intended to host 1-Mile, 2-Mile, and 3-Mile Swims, but the 3-Mile Swim was cancelled due to cold water temperatures. Results can be found at:

<https://runsignup.com/Race/Results/93445#resultSetId-254173;perpage:100>

In the 2-Mile Swim, Rick Heiman took 1st place (M60-69), Barbara Burke took 2nd place (F60-69), and Jill Swavely took 1st (F50-59). In the 1-Mile Swim, Sean Reynolds took 1st place (M50-59), Lordes Brolly took 8th (F40-49), and James Brolly took 6th (M50-59).

May 30th 2021 and these season-opener swims with this year’s very competitive 64th Annual Navesink Swims (1.2 or 2.4 miles) in the Navesink River attracted 257 participants this year. Results can be found at: <https://raceforum.com/navesink>.

June 13th 2021 and the annual Great Chesapeake Bay Swim held nearby Annapolis, Maryland, was *cancelled* again this year.

July 4th 2021 and another DelMoSports “extravaganza event” was held in Wildwood Crest, New Jersey. Newly christened as the Freedom 1 Mile Swim & Freedom 1/4 Mile Swim, the swims were held in the same Sunset Lake venue as the traditional September Splash Swim but at a much higher price! The One-Mile Swim attracted 173 swimmers and results can be found at: www.DelMoSports.com

June 27th 2021 and the Steelman Racing 13th Annual Nockamixon Swim Challenge at Nockamixon State Park, PA. Results for the various swim categories can be found at: <https://runsignup.com/Race/Results/82221#resultSetId-260785;perpage:100>

In the 3-Mile Non-Wetsuit Swim, Bob Breitel took 3rd place for overall Male swimmers and Stephanie Saucy took 3rd place for overall Female swimmers. Also, in the 3-Mile Non-Wetsuit Swim, Barbara Burke took 1st place (F60-69), Jill Swavely took 2nd place (F50-59), and Diane McManus took 2nd place (F70-79). In the 2-Mile Non-Wetsuit Swim, Laurie Hug took 3rd place for overall Female swimmers, Ryan Hegna took 2nd place for overall Male swimmers, Noreen Uppstrom took 2nd place (F50-59), and Staci Shaffling took 5th place (F20-29). In the 1-Mile Swim (combined Wetsuit and Non-Wetsuit swimmers), Wendy Stoudt took 2nd place (F50-59), Denise Pody took 1st place (F60-69), James Brolly took 9th (M50-59), and Lordes Brolly took 17th place (F40-49).

July 10th 2021 and the 41st Annual Ocean City Beach Patrol’s T. John Carey Masters Swim was held in Ocean City, New Jersey. With a preregistered fee of \$25.00, the 2021 Masters Swim presented challenging 63-degree water temperatures on a thankfully, warm and sunny morning. Four (4) participants decided to ignore the race-organizer ban on wetsuits when the

water was above 60 degrees. They wore their wetsuits to stay warm and actually enjoyed their swim, even though they were no longer eligible for an official "place" in the swim. Younger and slimmer swimmers swam with the risk of hypothermia. Ruth Bennett, a 74-year-old female swimmer, was so cold and unable to walk onto the beach after finishing the chilly swim. Wetsuit swimmer, Paul Sweeny, helped her out of the ocean and walked with her to the finish line. She was eventually taken to the safe comfort of heated seats in her car. Lucky for her, she was not taken to the hospital for treatment. There can be serious consequences from hypothermia especially when older swimmers endure prolonged exposure to cold water temperatures. Wetsuits should be allowed at the discretion of each swimmer when the ocean is 72 degrees or cooler to allow swimmers a comfortable and safe swim. Unfortunately, "blue" swim caps do not show up well in the water and the race organizers should consider providing neon colors in orange, yellow, green or pink swim caps to safety keep track of swimmers in the water.



Happy to be back on the beach again after the Masters Swim (left to right) with Allyson Adams (2nd – Women 50 to 59 years – Olney, MD), Lynn Dunn (3rd – Women 50 to 59 – Seaside Park, NJ), Delia Perez (2nd – Women 65 & older – National Park, NJ), and Doug Frohock (3rd – Men 65 & older – Mamora, NJ).

Almost 120 individuals registered and a total of 104 swimmers finished the Masters Swim and finishing times ranged from Dolan Grisbaum (17 years of age from Ocean City, NJ) crushing first place in 19:51 minutes to Scott Buchheit (70 years of age from Haddonfield, NJ) who was the final finishing swimmer in 1:01:49 overall. There were 4 swimmers who finished but wore wetsuits, and they were not included in the final results. This year, there were no medals awarded for age group winners (first, second, and third place) and there was some confusion in mixing the male and female age groups too. Johnson's Popcorn was awarded to first place age group winners as well as to the youngest (11-year-old Mason Breidenstine from Linwood, NJ) and oldest (84-year-old Bill Pugh from Ocean City, NJ). The

2020 Masters Swim was cancelled due to COVID-19 and this year, the swim organizers are fairly new to managing this swim. Now that they've managed the 2021 Masters Swim, hopefully, next year's swim will include better protocols for water temperature consideration, brighter swim caps for tracking swimmers in the water, and less confusion recognizing outstanding age group swimmers.

July 17th 2021 and the 92nd Annual Pageant Swim was held in Atlantic City. With a preregistered fee of \$40.00, the Seahawks Swimming hosted the 92nd Pageant Swim in conjunction with USA Swimming to ensure the continuance of this historic swim. This year the 1.2 Mile Pageant Swim attracted 88 swimmers though online official results were only available for 77 swimmers.

The 91st Pageant Swim finally started after 10:15 a.m. and swimmers were assigned to one of two groups with 5 minutes between each group entering the water. Ocean conditions were choppy as we swam the "box course" out to sea and then swam south into the wind stirring up a "washing machine" chop over the northbound swells. After turning the second buoy in towards the shore and then the third turn buoy, the ocean conditions improved somewhat as we swam back toward first turn buoy for our final turn and swim back to the start area on the beach. The water temperature was 77 degrees allowing swimmers to remain toasty and comfortable throughout the swim.



After the 92nd Pageant Swim and happy to be back on the beach (left to right): Doug Bergen, Marilyn Brahms, Steve Gazsi, George Thiel, Doug Frohock, Delia Perez, Susan Reich, Molly Williamson, and Polly Thiel

In 2017, when the Pageant Swim was reactivated, there were a total of 57 swimmers. There were 80 swimmers who participated in the 2018 Pageant Swim and 95 swimmers participated in the 2019 Pageant Swim. In 2020, a total of 85 swimmers completed the Pageant Swim course. This year, Johnson Popcorn buckets were awarded for 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place age group winners. The first male finisher, Zachary Vasser (16 years of age from Linwood, NJ), swam the course in 20:39 minutes. The first female finisher, Lydia Palmer (17 years of age from Marlton, NJ), swam the course in 21:14 minutes.



USA Swimming Race Officials on the beach for a post-race photo op after the Pageant Swim (shown left to right): Erin Rossi, Larry Schwarz, Chris Neuman, Ray Peden, Alison Riocciotti, and Christopher Barry.

July 17th 2021 and the 20th Annual Iron Soldiers Swim & Biathlon fundraiser was held in Ocean City, NJ, starting at 7 pm at 28th Street and the Beach for a ¾ Mile Ocean Swim.

July 24th 2021 and the 8th Annual Sea Isle City Beach Patrol 1 Mile Ocean Swim was held in Sea Isle City, NJ. Swimmers could preregister with a fee of \$20.00 and that's a bargain price these days. Typically, swimmers are bused to the start of the swim and it's usually hot on the beach and at least the ocean was a comfortable 75 degrees. There were 174 swimmers participating in the swim this year and overall swim results can be found at:

<https://runsignup.com/Race/Results/72032/#resultSetId-264107;perpage:100>



2021 Sea Isle City Beach Patrol Ocean Mile Swim – post race lunch with swim friends (shown left to right): Polly and George Thiel (Sommers Point, NJ), Doug Frohock (Mamora, NJ), Dave English (Glassboro, NJ), Ann Christensen (Mullica Hill, NJ), and Delia Perez (National Park, NJ)

July 31st 2021 and the 6th Annual Pier to Pier Challenge held in Wildwood, New Jersey. With a preregistered fee of \$30.00 and parking on the beach in Wildwood, this swim usually offers a family-friendly evening swim in the ocean. This year was no exception and the ocean conditions at 6:30 p.m. were very pleasant for the 109 swimmers enjoying this evening swim with friends and family.

Race Director, Bill Auty, swam with his 10-year-old son, Will Auty, in his first ocean swim race this evening – and he happily earned an award! Results can be found at:

<https://runsignup.com/Race/Results/73891/#resultSetId-265544;page:2;perpage:100>



Before the Pier-to-Pier Swim Challenge, (shown left to right) Dave Hirsch (CMCH, NJ), Delia Perez (National Park, NJ) and Doug Bergen (Ocean City, NJ).



Race Director, Billy Auty, with his sons, 8-year-old West (left), and Will (right). Billy proudly swam with 10-year-old Will in his first ocean swim race!

August 1st 2021 and the reconstituted version now known as the Jim Whelan Around the Island Marathon Swim in Atlantic City, New Jersey, was held in the Atlantic City waters.



Jim Whelan – high school teacher, Atlantic City Life Guard, Mayor of Atlantic City, NJ Assemblyman, NJ State Senator, and Open Water Swimmer

The organizing committee for the 2nd annual Jim Whelan Open Water Festival and the 55th Around the Island Swim welcomed Hall of Fame marathon open water swimmer, Marilyn Bell DiLascio, as a special guest for this year's swim. DiLascio was the official starter for the open water marathon. In September 1954, she set a world record for being the first person to swim across Lake Ontario. She began her marathon swimming career just a few months earlier in Atlantic City when she competed in the first ever "Around The Island Swim." She was the first female to complete the A.C. course as a 16-year-old. DiLascio's ties to the event go deeper, as she met her future husband, Joseph "Chip" DiLascio, at the 1954 event. Chip DiLascio was working as an Atlantic City Beach Patrol lifeguard when she met him while she trained for the race.



Marilyn Bell DiLascio, originally from Toronto, was inducted to the Canada Sports Hall of Fame, Ontario Aquatic Hall of Fame, International Marathon Swimming Hall of Fame and the International Swimming Hall of Fame. She continues to mentor and encourage open water swimmers from around the world, always emphasizing the importance of safe swimming practice for the swimmers and their support teams. "I'm thrilled that the organizers of the Jim Whelan Open Water Festival invited me to be a part of the Around The Island Swim again," she said. "This race holds a special place in my heart, and it's a wonderful thing to see it still going strong 67 years after I swam it."

The "Around The Island Swim" is a 22.75-mile open water marathon around Absecon Island. The race was resurrected in 2019 as part of the Jim Whelan Open Water Festival, named in memory of the late Atlantic City mayor, state senator and advocate for swimming and water safety. All proceeds from the festival benefit Green Whales, a nonprofit supporting various children's swimming programs in Atlantic County. There was no race in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Swimmers in the 55th Around the Island Swim ran into difficult ocean conditions on Sunday and no one was able to finish the marathon swim. The rules of the 22.75-mile race around Absecon Island restrict the swim to a 10-hour time limit, and no swimmers in the clockwise race were at the North Jackson Avenue cutoff point at that time.



"We ended the race after 10 hours, 25 minutes, and there were no finishers," said race director Karen Brown at the Atlantic City Boathouse race headquarters near the Albany Avenue Bridge. "We don't know if there will be any (official winners). A lot of people had different reasons for not finishing in the 10-hour limit. Some just said it wasn't their day. This race wasn't held last year due to the pandemic. We had a team working tirelessly to make it successful. We had a lot of people working to make it safe and this just breaks my heart."

When Brown, race referee Ray Paden, assistant race director Sari Carroll and a few other officials stopped the race, Seth Baetzold, of River Falls, Wisconsin, was in the lead in the intracoastal waters of Ventnor Heights. Two other solo swimmers from the original 11 individual swimmers, John Zeigler (Pennsylvania) and Greg O'Connor (Natick, Massachusetts) were still swimming.

The race had five relay teams consisting of two to five swimmers each, and none finished the course either. The Ringoes (Craig Hubert and Oleg Chebotarev) were near Baetzold and leading two other relays (two relay teams had dropped out). Eight of the individual competitors decided not to continue (the earliest after 3 hours, 15 minutes and the last at 9 hours, 54 minutes). A swimmer who had not reached the intracoastal waters of Longport by the 10-hour limit was pulled from the race.



Seth Baetzold, 26, of River Falls, Wisconsin, was leading the Around the Island Swim on Sunday night when the 22.75-Mile Swim was halted when it went beyond the 10-hour limit.

Baetzold and the team of Hubert and Chebotarev were about 3 miles from the end when the race was stopped. "The waves were really rough in the ocean, and they pulled me almost to the beach," said Baetzold, 26. "It was frustrating. I was leading, but I expected to do it faster. It took a lot of energy out of me. I swam out further in the ocean so as to not get pulled into the beach. Next summer, I intend to swim the English Channel, but hopefully I'll come back here again."

According to Ray Peden, "All the swimmers would have finished within the time limit under good conditions. The conditions were as challenging as the last 20 times this race was held. We have no control over the weather, and it was a major factor. The tide and currents weren't favorable, the way they've been in past years. This race has always been considered one of the most challenging events in the country. I expect next year there will be a larger draw (lineup) than in years past because people have a tendency to challenge themselves."

Race spokesperson Justin Peticolas said he was extremely proud of every swimmer and rower (the swimmers were each accompanied by doubles crews, for safety reasons). Robin Taylor, a member of the race committee, talked about how the direction of the wind made the swim so difficult. Bob Kerrigan, a race adviser, worked diligently for hours, along with Bown, Peden and Carroll as they got phone calls and reports on the progress. "I'm disappointed, and more disappointed for the swimmers," Kerrigan. "I wish we had had a finisher."

The race got a good start after 7 a.m. at the boathouse, which was also set to be the finish line. The guest starter was Marilyn Bell DiLascio, who swam the first 'Around The Island Swim in 1954' and was the first woman to finish the race. The 5-foot DiLascio was only 16 years old at the time. "I was the seventh finisher and the first woman (in 1954)," said DiLascio, now a resident of Hudson Valley, New York. "It was a nice day. We started and finished at Steel Pier and we went to Longport first (clockwise). "It was easier to swim it than be the starter today. We needed to juggle lots of activities throughout the day."

August 7th 2021 and the informal 26th Annual Donny Fund Day (2½ Mile Swim, Kayak, or Paddle Surf across Lakes Bay or 5K Run or Walk along the shore of Lakes Bay) rescheduled from family fun day to Saturday, August 7th 2021. It is held at the Yacht Club of Pleasantville in Pleasantville, New Jersey and this fundraiser event costs \$40 to pre-register and \$50 onsite during the day of the event. For more information, visit their website: <https://www.thedonnyfund.org/events/donny-johnny-day>

August 11th 2021 and the **Poverty to Cove 2.4-Mile Swim** in Cape May, is now just another DelMoSports extravaganza event for \$55.00 per swimmer. Steve DelMonte was a past participant in this "free" swim among friends plus invitation-only swimmers that was held early in the morning (6:30 a.m. so) and lots of fun to swim with the best tides and currents south down the beach. DelMoSports is capitalizing on this "friendly" insider swim and what was once free. Now swimmers have to "pay to play," while DelMoSports sets its sights on overcharging swimmers big fees after years of learning just how much triathletes are willing to pay for their "sports of choice." And to put a more acceptable spin on the new costly venue, a portion of the fee after expenses, goes to the Cape May Beach Patrol Clete Cannone Scholarship Fund. Instead of an early morning swim, this new "pay to play" swim starts at 6:30 p.m. on a Wednesday evening. The 2.4-Mile Swim attracted 156 swimmers and results can be found at: www.DelMoSports.com

August 14th 2021 and the 37th Annual Mid-Summer Lavallette Ocean Swim was held at 8 a.m. with 97 swimmers participating. See results at: <http://lavallette.org/beach/mileswim.html>

August 15th 2021 and the Captain Turner Ocean Swim was held at 6:30 p.m. in Longport, NJ, with 59 swimmers participating in the half-mile ocean swim. Results can be found at: <https://runsignup.com/Race/Results/78683/#resultSetId-267605;perpage:5000>

August 29th 2021 and the Elks Club in Brigantine, NJ, hosts it's 8 a.m. Bayfest Swim with rainy and overcast conditions limiting participation to almost 20 swimmers that morning.



Race Director, Midge Kerr (right) with Delaware Valley USMS Open Water Rep, Delia Perez



Finish area for the Cedar Island Swim



August 29th 2021 and the 11th Annual 5K Cedar Island Swim in Avalon, New Jersey, treated 237 swimmers to another interesting adventure swim around Cedar Island in 78-degree water. The Cedar Island 5K Swim remains my personal favorite these days especially with the loss of the Yates Swim – a wonderful navigational swim starting in the inlet between Atlantic City and Brigantine and swimming west into the back bay with an incoming tide to finish the race in Gardner's Basin.

The World Open Water Swimming Association named the Cedar Island 5K Swim as One of America's Top Open Water Swims. This is a list of the most unique, most popular, most historic, most beautiful, most interesting, and most challenging open water swims across the 50 states of the United States of America. Typically, the Cedar Island 5K Swim helps to raise funds for favorite Tim Kerr Charities and all proceeds from the race will be going to the Philadelphia Treats for Troops, American Legion Post #331, Travis Mills Foundation, Sneakers

for Soldiers, Semper Fido K9 Basics, Dog Tag Bakery, and Mission K9 Rescue. This year, they also suggested donations for the military personnel who were injured in Afghanistan and will be mailing gift cards to them while they recover at Walter Reed Hospital.

This year, the 5K Cedar Island Swim returned to its usual “flailing arms and legs” in-water start with 238 swimmers heading into the back bay of Avalon at the same time. There was the usual “bunching” up of swimmers at the beginning of the race with the inexperienced stopping and blocking experienced swimmers trying to swim around them along the course. This year, the traditional champagne sip was located at a dock area about $\frac{3}{4}$ along the swim course and a swimmer really had to want to find it for a sip of bubbly. During the first leg of the course, we swam with a slack tide. The second leg headed us into the slightly outgoing tide and the third leg offered a little push with the slightly outgoing tide. As we turned into the final fourth leg of the course, we finally found the added outgoing tide for a little extra push to the finish back at the Avalon Yacht Club.

Historically, the informal inception of the Cedar Island Swim was created as a challenge among friends in 2010, race director, Midge Kerr, offers a “champagne toast” as a very inventive way to celebrate the swim while refreshing the palate from all the salty water. This year, the after-swim refreshments were discontinued to because of COVID-19 safety issues ... but the amazing and locally-made cream puff pastries were available after the swim. The only difference this year was the individual bagging of each delicious cream puff as a health and safety precaution. For the sixth year in a row now, chip timing was used for the swimmers and the results were eventually posted on the Kerr Charities website at <http://www.sjtiming.com/Cedarswim16.html>.

Lucky for us, Kerr Charities hosts its fundraising swim for various charities (specially selected by Tim & Midge Kerr) and the swim is more like an informal training event with prizes usually awarded to just the top five overall male and female swimmers and grand masters. But this year, they experimented with awards for the top finishers in each male and female age group ... and it did NOT go as expected! Awardees were not as patient and polite while grabbing for their awards while wasting more time than necessary. Thankfully, this is a “one-and-done” experiment this year and next year, Midge is returning with her winning concept to give awards to just the top five overall male and female swimmers plus the grandmaster swimmers.

Awards were given to top finishers individually with the benefit of a crowd of cheering on the swimmers. Luke Brennen (age 15 – Trenton, NJ) finished 1st overall and 1st male in 51:17 minutes. And Alexandra Sommers (age 15 – Ringoes, NJ) finished 4th overall and 1st female in 51:29 minutes.

August 29th 2021 and the 8th Annual Escape the Cape Triathlon includes a One-Mile Swim in Cape May for a cost of \$119.00 for each participant. Since 2013, the race director, Steve Delmonte, scheduled his event either during the same weekend or just before or after the annual Great Chesapeake Bay Swim. In 2021, he scheduled his One-Mile Swim on the same day as the long-standing 3-Mile Cedar Island Swim in Avalon, New Jersey. Results can be found at: www.DelMoSports.com

May through August 2021 and French Creek Racing hosted a series of six (6) river swims, each one ½ mile in length, swum in the Schuylkill River. Many Delaware Valley Masters swimmers participated in these swims. If a swimmer missed one or more swims, their overall aggregate swim score correspondingly reduces their ability to score well in the swim series. Some of the reported results do not fully represent the swimmer's proficiency in the water.

By the end of August, this partial list of a few swimmers based on their final combined score standings for points per race. Barbara Burke earned 1st overall Female Swimmer, Chris Lebold earned 2nd (M50-59), Diane McManus earned 1st (F70-79), Laurie Hug earned 4th (F50-59), Stephanie Saucy earned 6th (F50-59), and Jill Swavely earned 7th (F50-59).

September 19th 2021 and the French Creek SwimFest hosted varying distance swims in Hopewell Lake (75-degree water temperature), Eleverson, Pennsylvania. Results found at <https://frenchcreekracing.com/wp-content/uploads/2021-French-Creek-SwimFest-Results.pdf>

The 8-Mile Swim and participating as the "Red Squirrels" relay team of Meehan & Hannah Plimpton, they finished first in the relay option. In the 6-Mile Swim, Caroline Stein earned 1st for overall Female swimmer, and Diane McManus (70 plus years) earned 2nd for overall Female swimmer. In the 5K Swim, Laurie Hug took 1st overall Female swimmer and Bob Breitel took 1st overall Male swimmer. Also in the 5K Swim, Vlikey Swanson took 3rd overall Female swimmer, Staci Shaffling took 1st place (F20-29), Noreen Uppstrom took 1st (F50-59), and Gerry Shaffling took 1st place (M60+).

September 19th 2021 and the Steelman Racing Endless Summer Swim at Marsh Creek State Park in Pennsylvania. Results may be found at runsignup.com and also try this link for the results: <https://runsignup.com/Race/Results/94269#resultSetId-275536;perpage:100> In the 3-Mile Non-Wetsuit Swim, Barbara Burke took 1st place for (F60-69) swimmers. In the 2-Mile Swim, Ryan Hegna was the lead swimmer. In the 1-Mile Swim, Sean Reynolds earned a 3rd place for overall Male swimmers. Currently, the website is not accessible and these results are based on Barbara Burke's recollections from the swim events.

September 26th 2021 and the 33rd Annual Jim McDonnell Lake Swims that normally offers a 2-day event in Lake Audubon, Reston, Virginia during the Memorial Day Weekend rescheduled its swim for Sunday, September 26th 2021. The race organizers hope to return to the Memorial Day Weekend venue in 2022. Additional race information can be found at <https://www.restonmasters.com/jmls-lake-swim/event-weekend-timelines/>.

September 25th 2021 and the September Splash Swims (1-Mile and 2-Miles) were held in Sunset Lake starting at 9 a.m. in the back-bay waters of Wildwood Crest, New Jersey. The swim was not promoted and participation was limited to the local swimmers and local youth swim teams only.

The 2021 Open Water Season offered far more swim events this summer as the COVID-19 pandemic gradually started to ease-off and swim enthusiasts found their way back into open water swim events this season. With increasing vaccination rates, hopefully the vaccine can effectively banish the virus from negatively impacting daily living and create a healthy upcoming 2022 Open Water Season.

While we cannot change conditions or ensure the things we love will last forever, here is a teachable moment for us all to consider. Kelly Annie, a jewelry designer who created her own “perfectly imperfect collection” of handcrafted jewelry with soul and her “keep on swimming” bracelet inspires us to remember – “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

17th October 2021

“Nothing in the world is as soft and yielding as water. Yet for dissolving the hard and inflexible, nothing can surpass it. The soft overcomes the hard; the gentle overcomes the rigid.” ~ Tao Te Ching ~



Wading into the ocean, the water bears our weight as it slides through our fingers and between our toes. We become keenly aware of the abundance of life as well as every one of our fellow swimmers. We realize why we swim and why the pull is relentless. We immerse ourselves in the water and feel so relaxed and connected to the good in the world. We are rinsed of time as past and future dissolve, and there is only this moment.