

2018 Open Water Swim Season Summary

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

The 2018 open water season offered more than 70 open water swims at the shore and nearby states. Unfortunately, with the ongoing financial crisis for the city's budget, Atlantic City, New Jersey, the administration has yet to reinstate our longstanding and beloved Yates Swim held in the Brigantine Inlet. In late August 2016, volunteers hosted the resuscitated Pageant Swim in an effort to save the historic Pageant Swim, the oldest and longest running swim in the nation. This year, the swim was managed under the auspices of a combination of Seahawks Swimming and USA Swimming along with other organizers to maintain the tradition of the Pageant Swim. In agreeing to a compromise with Atlantic City officials, the Pageant Swim is no longer held on the Saturday morning during the Labor Day Weekend but now scheduled during mid to late August. This year, the Pageant Swim was held in mid-August and avoided potential conflicts with other swim events already planned during the same weekend in August. The Pageant Swim tends to focus on young swimmers instead of the traditional masters swimmers along with USA Swimming rules. Other compromises include changing the swim course to swimming with the current and shortening the swim to 1.2 Mile Ocean Swim instead of the historic 1.5 Mile Pageant Ocean Swim that always maintained its tradition of a north to southbound course.

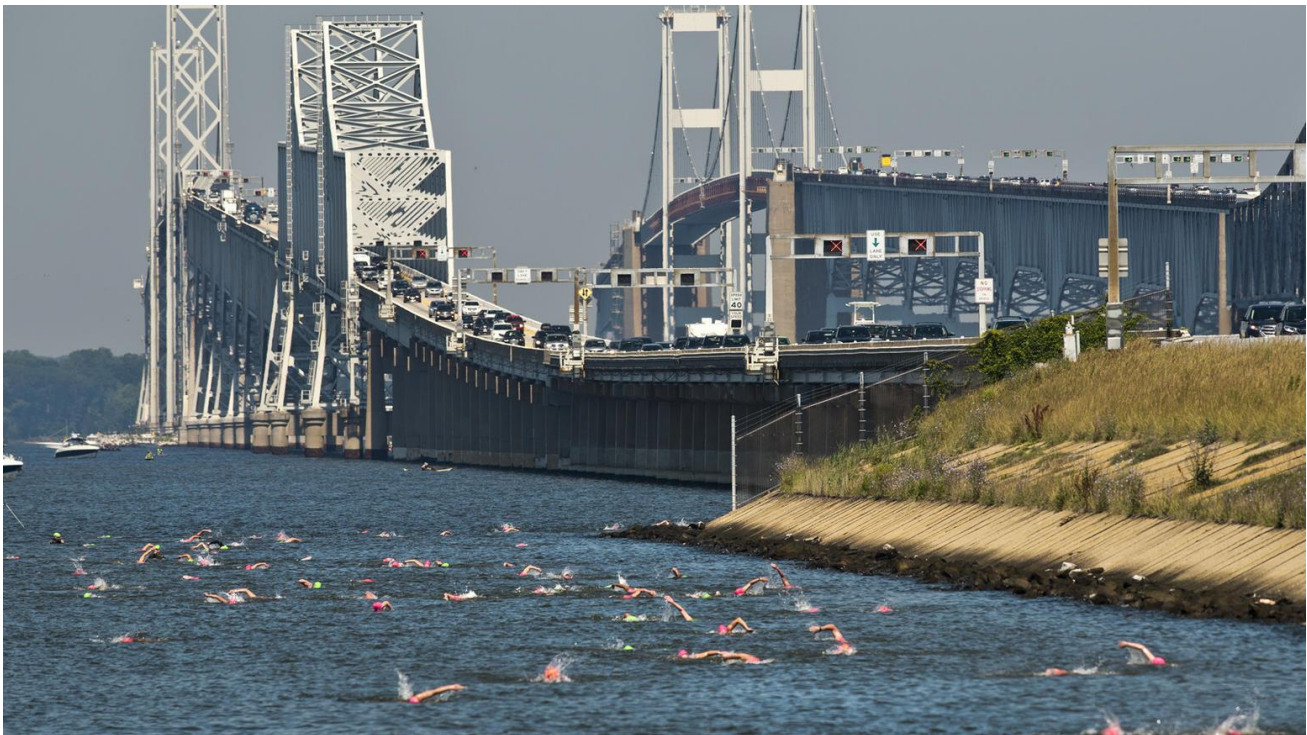
May 27th 2018 and the 31st Annual Jim McDonnell Lake Swims offer a 2-day event in Lake Audubon, Reston, Virginia during the May 26th and 27th weekend. Saturday offers a 1 mile Practice Swim on the racecourse and Sunday offers 2 races, 1 mile race and 2 mile race. The 2-Mile race serves as the 2018 USMS Middle Distance Championship. Water temperatures are usually in the 70's F, and both CAT I and CAT II swimwear are allowed. Delaware Valley USMS members Laurie Hug and Vibeke Swanson swam and excelled as Top Ten Swimmers in the women's 2-Mile Championship. Laurie Hug (age 53) finished 1st in 43:16 minutes and Vibeke Swanson (age 57) finished 7th in 47:04 minutes. It was a beautiful day for the swims but tragically, Kevin Rudy (age 44 from Falls Church, VA), died after completing the first loop of the 2-Mile Swim. He intended to use the swim as a training event for the upcoming 4.4-Mile Swim on June 10th 2018 at the Great Chesapeake Bay Swim.

May 27th 2018 offered good season opener swims with the very competitive 62nd Annual Navesink Swims (1.2 or 2.4 miles) in the Navesink River with tri-athletes heavily represented.

June 10th 2018 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 sixth year that Steve has scheduled his event during the same weekend as the annual Great Chesapeake Bay Swim. For results www.DelMoSports.com

June 10th 2018 and it was a somewhat challenging day for the annual Great Chesapeake Bay Swim held nearby Annapolis, Maryland. Volunteers, organizers and swimmers all agreed:

conditions were impacted by the heavy overnight rains for Sunday morning's annual Great Chesapeake Bay Swim. The race began about a half hour earlier and the outgoing tide pushed the swimmers south throughout the course requiring them to swim sideways for most of the course under the twin bridge spans. The charity fundraiser includes a race from one side of the bay to the other, a distance of 4.4 Miles, as well as the One Mile Challenge race. Participants in the longer event race from Sandy Point State Park to the Bay Bridge Marina across the water. The one-mile swimmers compete in a triangle course with the first leg sending swimmers into the wind and choppy water, then turn into the outgoing current in the second leg with the final leg swimming into the warmest water to the finish line.



Swimmers in the 2018 Great Chesapeake Bay Swim approach the Kent Island finish line.

There were 575 registered entrants who started the 2018 GCBS swim but only 532 swimmers competed in the 4.4-Mile race. Another 285 competed in the One Mile Challenge and 271 swimmers finished in the 74-degree water. Volunteer Jeff Whetzel said, "Last night's rain made conditions more challenging this year," and he pilots a powerboat, one of roughly 65 in the water from the Chesapeake Bay Power Boat Association. Members volunteer time each year to help with swimmer safety, by protecting swimmers and ensuring that if the entire race needs to get out of the water for any reason, there are enough boats to do so.

The swimmers in the 4.4-Mile event left in two waves from Sandy Point State Park at around 10:30 a.m. The first wave of One Mile Challenge Swimmers entered the water at 11 a.m. followed by the remaining three waves in increments of 5 minutes between each wave.

Despite the good weather, the unbeknown to the swimmers was the stronger outgoing tide due to the heavy overnight rains. Once on the course, swimmers soon discovered they had to swim sideways across the bay between the twin spans so as not to be pushed too far south and off course by drifting beyond the southbound bridge span. The clear sky and fairly

calm water was a plus for the more than 700 volunteers who manage the event. According to race director Chuck Nabit, "to keep the swimmers safe as they cross the bay, at the ready is a dive team, two helicopters, 20 jet skis, 50 kayaks and 100 boats, including the 65 power boats." The bay swim is a fundraiser for the March of Dimes, Chesapeake Bay Trust, and other charities. Not including day-of donations, the event raised more than \$200,000 for those causes this year. Nabit said, "There are typically two types of swimmers who come to the event. There are those who do it once and check it off the bucket list and those who return year after year."



Kuni Mihara and "3Ds" at the finish line the day before the Great Chesapeake Bay Swim – (left to right) Kuni Mihara (Mt. Laurel, NJ), Dave English (Philadelphia, PA), Delia Perez (National Park, NJ), and Doug Frohock (Mamora, NJ) on June 9th 2018.

The latter is the case for Doug Frohock, 67, of Mamora, NJ, who swam across the bay in the 4.4 Mile Swim for the 30th time this year after 32 attempts. He heard about the big swim managed by the original race director, Fletcher Hanks, and decided to try it in 1986. "It has become my tradition ever since and I enjoy swimming this event with my friends. It's the only time you can swim across the bay when all boat traffic stops to allow us to swim safely across the bay," Frohock said. Another stalwart swimmer included Dave English (Philadelphia, PA) who just completed his 23rd 4.4 Mile Swim in the GCBS.

Another repeat swimmer is Delia Perez of National Park, NJ, the Open Water Representative for the Delaware Valley United States Masters Swimming. Delia participated four times in the 4.4-Mile Bay Swim, and successfully finished two times (2002 and 2005). In 2003, cold water resulted in hypothermia and she was pulled from the race after completing 3.5 miles with a core temperature of 90 degrees – one degree colder, and she would have been taken to the hospital. In 2004, a “rouge current” washed Perez and 50 other swimmers under the southern span of the bridges – where they were all promptly disqualified from finishing. Since 2006, Delia has been swimming the One Mile Challenge and just completed her 13th race this year. The One Mile Challenge begins and ends at the finish line for both events on the Eastern shore of the bay nearby Hemingway’s restaurant. Even though the swim is a shorter distance, it does have its challenges especially with amateurs entering an open water swim without a clue about sighting the course or experiencing choppy water for the very first time. The inexperienced swimmer stops and blocks or swims into other swimmers throughout the course, making it feel more like a steeplechase event with various hurdles to overcome.

The Great Chesapeake Bay Swim started after Brian Joseph Earley swam across the bay on June 13th 1982, and he dedicated his efforts in memory of his late father Joseph Earley, who died of complications from diabetes.

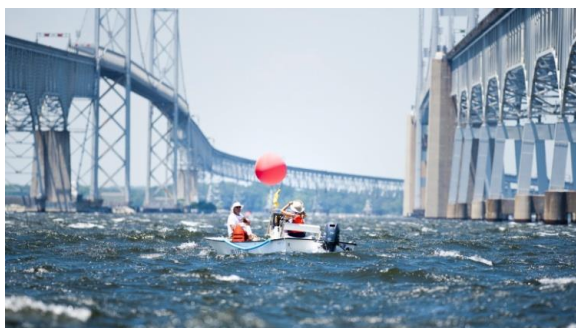
Finishing times were 15 minutes slower this year as compared to last year, and 44-year-old Patrick Donahue (Bethesda, MD) took 1st place overall in 1:44:47 (the 2017 winning time was 1:29:07), and 16-year-old Kelsey Cashman (Annapolis, MD) took 10th place overall and first female finisher in 1:53:36 (the 2017 winning time for first female was 1:40:11). As the oldest competing swimmer this year, Edward Briggs (Gaithersburg, MD) is a strong 81-year-old swimmer who finished first in his age group in 3:30:00 as compared to his 2017 finishing time of 2:57:38 that reflects this year’s tougher conditions for the swim. And 66-year-old Shirley Loftus-Charley continues to amaze us with her first place finishing time of 2:12:53.



Between the two bridge spans.



Start of the swim nearing the bridges at the GCBS race.



Setting the buoy markers along the course.



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

June 22nd 2018 – Due to continuing issues with insurance coverage, 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 remain **cancelled** by race director, Liz Casey.

June 23rd 2018 and the 20th Annual Bridge-to-Bridge Swims normally held in the back bay of Atlantic City remains **cancelled** as was last year's 19th annual event normally hosted by the (Atlantic City Aquatic Club).

July 1st 2018 and the informal 24th 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) 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.



July 7th 2018 and the 17th Annual Iron Soldiers Swim & Biathlon was held in Ocean City, NJ, starting at 7 pm at 28th Street and the Beach for a ¾ Mile Ocean Swim. The event honors a fallen warrior, Corporal Jon T. Hicks Jr. USMC from Atco, New Jersey. He died while conducting combat operations in Ashraf, Iraq. Monetary donations and "Treats for Troops" item donations are greatly appreciated for this cause to honor fallen warriors that Fred Kelvan founded as the "Philadelphia Treats for Troops" program.



Start of the 2018 Ocean City Masters Swim: First Wave of Male Swimmers

July 14th 2018 and the 38th 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 delightful 75-degree ocean water was at least very comfortable given the race officials decided to make the swimmers swim north into the southbound current that kept the 167 swimmers (compared to 196 swimmers in 2017) busy navigating the large ocean swells to the finish. Wetsuits were permitted but swimmers who wore a wetsuit were disqualified from winning awards. Results can be found at www.lmsports.com



Maggie Wallace (1st Overall)



Doug Frohock, Delia Perez and Linda Hoke

The fastest swimmer in the 2018 T. John Carey One-Mile Master's Swim was Maggie Wallace (age 18 – Ocean City, NJ) won first overall and first female swimmer with a time of 20:17 minutes. Maggie graduated from Ocean City High School and competed with her high school swim teams. Doug Frohock (Marmora, NJ) took 2nd place for men 65 years & older age; Delia Perez (National Park, NJ) earned 3rd place for women 65 years & older age; and Linda Hoke

(Philadelphia, PA) won 2nd place in the women's 60 to 64 year age group – they were happy to display their hardware in their age group finishes in the Annual Masters Swim.

Maggie Wallace is a distance swimmer, specializing in the 1500 and 800-meter freestyle. She swam the Master's Swim last summer and took 2nd place overall in 2016 and 2017. 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 third year swimming it." Fortunately, the water was pleasantly 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." There were not a lot of waves and that is what I like," she said. "There was no current either so it was good swim."

Masters aged swimmers held their own in the Ocean City Master's Swim. Bob Pugh (Ocean City, NJ) at 55 years of age was the first male masters-age swimmer finishing 6th overall in 23:07 minutes. Ron Marks (Marmora, NJ) at 59 years of age was the second male masters-aged swimmer finishing 9th overall in 23:21 minutes, just 3 minutes and 4 seconds behind Wallace. Susan Reich (Ocean City, NJ) at 59 years of age was the first masters-aged female swimmer finishing 19th overall in 26:02 minutes and she continues to dazzle us all!



July 14th 2018: Kayakers on patrol along the OCMS course for the 38th Annual Ocean City Masters Swim

July 15th 2018 – The 10th 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) schedule for an early 9 a.m. start in the morning on July 15th 2018 was **cancelled** due to weather conditions. The “Steelman Swim” is the favorite open water swim for Pennsylvania swimmers. 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, and the Germantown Academy Masters make this swim their primary team open-water event. Find information and results at (www.steelmantriathlon.com).



Molly Williamson (left), Mari Schaefer, and Linda Hoke shown with the “angry sea” and safely back on the beach ... survival stories!



Delia Perez (left), Doug Frohock, his daughter, Denise, and grandson, Stephen Frohock.

July 21st 2018 and the 5th Annual Sea Isle City Beach Patrol One Mile Ocean Swim was held in Sea Isle City, New Jersey. About 25 years ago, this swim went on hiatus when it was held in extremely cold (quickly chilled to 52 degrees) water conditions due to an abrupt drop in water temperature caused by the west winds. Today’s 73-degree ocean water was warm enough but the 20 mph winds from the East created big waves and “washing machine” conditions for today’s “endless survival swim” to the finish. Anyone who completed the swim has complete bragging rights especially after hearing the SIC Beach Patrol members said, “If we had known it was going to be that bad, we wouldn’t have held the swim!”

The 5th Annual SICBP One Mile Ocean Swim maintains its 11 a.m. start scheduled for a Saturday morning. The timing of the swim coincides with shore rental turnovers and parking in Sea Isle City is difficult at best. If you miss the “bus” to the start of the swim, then it’s a long walk to the start of the swim. If you arrived at check-in area on time, perhaps you are lucky enough to hitch a ride on a school bus to the start of the swim. The SICBP allows swimmers to wear wetsuits without limiting their use to “cold water swimming” and it does not make a distinction between non-wetsuit and wetsuit-wearing participants – thus allowing faster finishing times for the wetsuit participants.

This year, the previous massive start of the swim that resulted in the “bunching of swimmers” around the first turn buoy was eliminated and a staggered start was instituted. Male swimmers entered the water first and female swimmers began their swim 3 minutes behind the first wave of male swimmers. Given the weather conditions with light rain and 20 mph winds from the East, the first turn buoy was available for the male swimmers but broke from its mooring for the start of the female swimmers. The high winds and pounding waves make it very difficult to get out to sea and once at sea, sighting the course was impossible because of the waves. Lucky for us, the two high-rise buildings near the boardwalk were stationary and we at least knew where the beach should be. The ocean conditions were so rough the SIC Beach Patrol never launched a row boat but tried to patrol the swim course with life guards on paddle boards and one jet ski ... but even the guards were continuously being pitched off their boards. Many swimmers quickly returned to shore at the beginning of the swim while others were rescued from the relentless churning sea. The overall results from the swim are **not accurate** and because of the timing chips, swimmers who did not swim or finish, are listed as finishers based on the time they turned in the timing chip. Brendan Lewis (age 16 from Garnet Valley, PA) was the first overall and first male swimmer to finish in 20:20 minutes and Maggie Wallace (age 18 from Ocean City, NJ) was second overall and the first female swimmer to finish in 21.53 minutes.

This year, the swim attracted 180 swimmers (as compared to 195 swimmers in 2017) 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 but the older masters level swimmers have to compete within 10-year clusters. Unfortunately, the SICBP only presents awards for 1st and 2nd place age group winners because they made the decision to limit the expense of 3rd place awards. Instead of simpler medal awards, they chose to award large standing trophies that look like “bowling trophies” and have to be stuffed back into a swim bag for the trip home. Maybe someday the award criteria will be improved for future swims and return to the typical 5-year age group awards for older swimmers, add 3rd place awards, and award medals instead of trophies.



Delia Perez, Maureen Kilgariff, and Martha Bent (Wildwood, NJ)



Delia Perez with race director, Bill Auty (Wildwood Beach Patrol)

August 4th 2018 and the 4th Annual Pier to Pier Challenge kicked off Saturday, August 4th at 6:30pm. After a somewhat stormy and windy day, the weather improved with sunny skies and calming winds for a very enjoyable evening swim in Wildwood, New Jersey. Ocean

conditions became fairly calm thanks to the west winds with strong rolling waves into shore along with the current running slightly north. It was a beautiful evening for an ocean swim as we managed to enjoy the 67-degree water and had fun with friends. Race Director, Billy Auty, has a winning venue for a swim with friends and families, the best tee shirts, and it is one of the few remaining evening swims. The course is in the form of two apex triangles, each a half mile, allowing swimmers exit and re-enter 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 halfway point. The unique course allows competitors to come in through the surf twice throughout the course. Body surfing skills and navigation expertise are also needed to negotiate the course. This is the only swim in the South Jersey area that has this unique "spectator friendly" course. This year, there were 120 swimmers as compared to last year's 80 swimmers entered in the Pier to Pier Challenge. There were included families swimming together with their children in their first ocean competition. The Pier to Pier Challenge includes age groups ranging from 10 and under to 60 plus. This year, Billy Auty hired a timing service for next year but they never recorded the results of the swim even with ankle chip bracelets!! The timing service made a great video recording everyone finishing the swim and maybe next year there will be swim results but then again, everyone seemed to enjoy swimming without having to go for the gold!



August 4th 2018 and the 34th 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. 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 58 swimmers participating this year. Swimmers can enjoy muffins, 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 15th 2018 and the Captain Turner Ocean Swim was held at 6:30 p.m. in Longport, NJ. The swim was originally scheduled for Sunday morning, August 12th 2018, and was supposed to start at 9 a.m. Unfortunately, the Longport Beach Patrol decided they were “too busy” and made a last minute decision to reschedule the swim for Wednesday evening instead. The only swimmers able to participate were local residents who could manage to squeeze in an evening swim. There were no results available regarding the swim or even how many swimmers participated but those who did swim, reported a beautiful evening for a swim and everyone received a nice beach towel. We will see what happens with the 2018 Captain Turner Swim in Longport, New Jersey.



Start of the 2018 Pageant Swim in Atlantic City, New Jersey

August 18th 2018 – and the reconstituted 89th Annual Pageant Swim was held in Atlantic City. It is the second time since 2016, when the Atlantic City Beach Patrol cancelled the swim indefinitely due to the lack of resources to manage the swim, Seahawks Swimming hosted the 89th Pageant Swim along with other volunteers to ensure the saving this historic swim. Concessions were made to the Atlantic City local government including moving the date of the swim prior to the Labor Day weekend, changing the location of the swim to start south of

the Ocean One Pier, modifying the direction of the swim course based on the prevailing current, and shortening the distance from 1½ Miles to a 1.24 Mile (2K) Ocean Swim.

"We are thrilled to be able to continue this event tradition, and honor one of the biggest proponents of swimming in the South Jersey region, Senator Jim 'the whale' Whelan," commented race coordinator Brian Elko. "The community has been incredibly supportive of the effort to preserve and foster more large-scale race efforts like this one, and we look forward to growing this event year after year and attracting swimmers throughout the country to a challenging, safe and fun swim." First held in 1929 as the Miss America Pageant Swim, the event is the oldest continuous open-water swim in the country, and it follows a 1-mile course along the Atlantic City beach, ending just south of Jim Whelan Boardwalk Hall at Albany Avenue beach. The swim was scheduled for a 10 a.m. start on the Michigan Avenue beach and honored the late State Sen. Jim Whelan, a former Atlantic City mayor and member of the Atlantic City Beach Patrol, who died August 22nd 2017, and he swam always swam in the annual Pageant Swim.

The 89th Pageant Swim finally started at 10:20 a.m. but unfortunately, the race organizers did NOT change the direction of the swim course to accommodate the northbound current. Instead, the swimmers entered the ocean at Michigan Avenue and swam south into the north bound current and waves and swells pushed north by winds from the south. It seems the decision to maintain the swim direction was based on where the timing service was set up without giving preference to the swimmers required to navigate a very tough swim course. Thankfully, the water temperature was 78 degrees allowing swimmers to remain comfortable throughout an even longer duration in the water due to the swim conditions. The swim was challenging swimming against the current with sloppy ocean conditions making it difficult to breathe without taking in water, and seasick swimmers suffered!

The race organizers provided orange swim caps to the male swimmers and hot pink swim caps for the female swimmers – but unfortunately, orange buoys marked the course. It was difficult sighting due to the waves and confusing given all the orange swim caps in the water – next year, the organizers need to rethink the color scheme for swim caps and do a better job of marking the course for improved visibility for swimmers low in the water and waves. There was also some confusion about the oddly marked "flag" buoy that some thought indicated the upcoming buoy was the final turn buoy – but this was not the case and yet another buoy remained ahead before turning into shore for the long swim to the beach. Initially, the course was intended to be a 1.24 Mile swim (2K) but in reality, the actual course was a 1.6 Mile Swim. It was a tough swim resulting in finishing swim times 10 to 15 minutes slower as compared to results for those who participated in last year's swim. In 2017, there were a total of 57 swimmers and a total of 80 swimmers in the 2018 Pageant Swim.

In lieu of awards, trophies, or ribbons for age group winners, Johnson Popcorn, in three different sizes, were awarded to these age group winners. Joey Tepper (age 16) finished first overall and the first male swimmer in 31 minutes. Madison Kolessar (age 16) finished as the first female swimmer in 36:53 minutes. Noteworthy swimmers known to the Delaware Valley Local Masters Swimming Committee include Ron Marks (age 59) finishing 7th overall in 37:27 minutes (last year he finished in 29:22); Steven Gazsi (age 54) 23rd overall in 45:26 minutes (last year he finished in 36:03); James Waddington (age 60) finishing 36th overall in 49:03 minutes (last year he finished in 36:28 minutes; Ruth Bennett (age 71) finishing 64th overall

in 1 hour 2 minutes (last year she finished in 39:49 minutes); Molly Williamson (age 62) finishing 75th overall in 1 hour 7 minutes (last year she finished in 45:54 minutes); Kathryn Pramuk (age 61) finishing 77th overall in 1 hour 8 minutes (last year she finished in 49:14 minutes); Delia Perez (age 66) finished 79th overall and seasick in 1 hour 10 minutes (didn't swim last year); and John Zarych (age 70) finishing 80th overall in 1 hour 18 minutes (last year he finished in 54:52 minutes).

And here's some swimmer feedback about the Pageant Swim to consider for next year: the water temperature was perfect ... BUT swimming into the northbound current and winds from the south pushing the swells and waves into the swimmer's path was not. Since the Pageant Swim is no longer the "traditional Pageant Swim" that required swimmers to always navigate a north to south course and also, the new race organizers promoted the Pageant as a swim "with the current" and suggest adjusting the course to go with the current in 2019. When swimmers are allowed to swim with the current, there is less work for the guards to patrol and watch over participants. Using more flags along the swim course would be very helpful because sighting was tough due to the waves and swells in the ocean. It's also time to rethink the choice of swim cap colors when using orange buoys to mark the course and outfitting swimmers with the same bright orange swim caps – this just adds more confusion along the course. Using neon yellow and neon green or neon yellow for the male swimmers and neon pink for the female swimmers is a better choice. This change would help to better sight the course without confusing swim caps in the same color as the buoys as the course markers for the Pageant Swim.



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



New Finish Area for Cedar Island 5K Swim



August 26th 2018 and the 8th Annual 5K Cedar Island Swim in Avalon, New Jersey, treated 181 swimmers to an enjoyable swim around Cedar Island in 75-degree water. The Cedar Island 5K Swim remains my personal favorite these days especially with the loss of the Yates Swim – it was a wonderful navigational swim in the inlet between Atlantic City and Gardner's Basin with an incoming tide to finish the race in Atlantic City's Gardner's Basin. Today's conditions were comfortable and the 6 mph West wind waves caught up with swimmers on the final stretch to the finish. Here we swam directly into the waves caused by the wind. The first leg of the course "herds" swimmers south along the marsh before turning left into the residential area for the rest of the "box" course was congested with "swimmer crowding" and it felt more like a full-contact sport with punches to the head. The congestion eased up during the second leg and many swimmers wore a wetsuit to ensure faster times. Spotting the champagne dock for two big sips from a "fluted glass" was more difficult this year due to the early 8:25 a.m. start that had us staring into the sun as we swam to the back of the box course. If you spot the "champagne stop" on the dock, then swim over just long enough for a toast and continue swimming to the finish back at the Avalon Yacht Club. With its informal inception of the Cedar Island 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. As always, it was very pleasant swimming with 177 swimmers (the event closed at 200 entrants but not everyone actually showed up to swim) strung out along the course and we were all just living the dream!! The after swim refreshments included a variety of chilled healthy water selections (such as Vitamin Water and Core Hydration) plus cookies and amazing cream puff pastries. For the third 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, the Kerr Charities fundraising swim for various charities (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. Joey Tepper (age 16 – Egg Harbor, NJ) finished 1st overall and 1st male in 46:24 minutes. Megan Fox (age 14 – Margate City, NJ) finished 11th overall and 1st female in 50:31 minutes. Ron Marks (age 59 – Mamora, NJ) was the first male masters swimmer to finish 9th overall in 50:20 minutes and Susan Reich (age 60 – Ocean City, NJ) was the first female masters swimmer to finish 17th overall in 54:52 minutes.

August 26th 2018 – 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. Don Walsh (72 years of age from Spring Lake, NJ) reported good conditions for the morning swim. The water temperature was approximately 74 degrees with flat-water conditions without any tidal currents along the course. The swimmers swam out to the turn buoy and then swam back to return to the finish at the dock. It was a beautiful morning for a swim and Don was happy with his 18th overall finish. Jim Waddington (age 60) did well with his 7th overall finish as did George Thieler (age 74) with his 11th overall finish. Marilyn Brahms (age 70) was 15th overall and Molly Williamson (age 62) finished 20th overall. The swim attracted just 27 swimmers this year and last year too. For results, contact John Livezey at deliver10@aol.com.

The 2018 Open Water Season gave us gave us chilly to 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, the scheduling of these swims moved to the morning and attract fewer swimmers than in previous years – and sadly, the Yates Swim is no more. Perhaps this is the direct result of triathlon event scheduling 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 luring swimmers from the historically long-standing swims at the South Jersey shore. As a testament to these traditions, the Pageant Swim celebrated its 89th Anniversary as the oldest open water swim in the country. Sea Hawks Swimming now manage 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 1.2 Mile Ocean Swim. However, purists of the swim remain disappointed with the change in course, swim venue, and scheduling for this historic ocean swim.



Kuni Mihara – morning swim in Birchwood Lake (Medford NJ) on August 23rd 2016



Kuni at Chesapeake Bay Swim "base camp" (6/10/2018)

On September 12th 2018, we unexpectedly lost our friend, Kuniaki Mihara, a USMS masters swimmer, member of the Delaware Valley USMS and swam with the Jersey Wahoos for 34 years while keeping the Wahoos informed about DVLMSC news. Kuni graduated from the University of Nebraska and a distinguished member of the UN swim team. He competed in numerous long distance swims over the years including several 4.4 Mile Chesapeake Bay Swims. He continued to travel with us to the annual Chesapeake Bay Swims not as a competitor but as an "inspirational coach" urging us on to have the courage to make every swim our own. Kuni recently drove to the University of Nebraska in late August for the kickoff game of the 2018 season – he always enjoyed his annual visits to campus. Kuni was one of a "rare breed of gentlemen," who always welcomed everyone to talk and swim with him. In

June, Kuni celebrated his 78th birthday and we will truly miss our friend, who was a tireless champion of his swimming circle and those lucky enough to be his friend.

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 with her own “perfectly imperfect collection” of handcrafted jewelry with soul, 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

2nd October 2018

“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 ~

