

2019 Open Water Swim Season Summary

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

The 2019 open water season offered more than 70 open water swims at the shore and nearby states. The longstanding and beloved Yates Swim that was once held in the Brigantine Inlet, has yet to be reinstated by Atlantic City, New Jersey, officials due to ongoing financial problems with the city's budget. The newest addition to this year's open water swim season was the reconstituted Around the Island Marathon Swim in Atlantic City that was held on July 14th 2019. The Marathon Swim attracted 12 solo swimmers and three relay teams for the long swim around Absecon Island. The 90th Pageant Swim that was held on August 17th 2019 was better managed this year by Seahawks Swimming and USA Swimming who are actually listening to experienced swimmers about running a better swim experience for both the novice and masters for this historic swim.

May 26th 2019 and the 32nd Annual Jim McDonnell Lake Swims offered a 2-day event in Lake Audubon, Reston, Virginia during the May 25th and 26th weekend. Saturday offers a 1 mile Practice Swim on the racecourse and Sunday offers 2 races, 1 mile race and 2 mile race. Water temperatures are usually in the 70's F, and both CAT I and CAT II swimwear are allowed. The swims attract approximately 400 swimmers annually with the option to swim in four (4) different categories: One Mile Swim with a wetsuit or without a wetsuit and a Two Mile Swim with a wetsuit or without a wetsuit.

May 26th 2019 offered good season-opener swims with the very competitive 63rd Annual Navesink Swims (1.2 or 2.4 miles) in the Navesink River with tri-athletes heavily represented.

June 2nd 2019 and the Escape the Cape Triathlon includes a 3-Mile 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 seventh year that Steve has scheduled his event either during the same weekend or just before or after the annual Great Chesapeake Bay Swim. Results: www.DelMoSports.com

June 9th 2019 and it was a challenging day for the annual Great Chesapeake Bay Swim held nearby Annapolis, Maryland. Volunteers, organizers and swimmers all agreed: conditions would be severely impacted by the late morning weather forecast including small craft warnings, high winds along with heavy rains anticipated for later in the day for Sunday's annual Great Chesapeake Bay Swim. Since its inception, today was the first time ever that the 4.4-Mile Swim was shortened to half its distance. Instead of the usual crossing under the bridge, the 4.4-Mile Swim course was altered to a **2-Mile Course** based on the typical triangular course the 1-Mile Bay Challenge swimmers usually cover in their swim event. The organizers also tried to speed up the timeframe for today's swims with slightly earlier start times. The One Mile Challenge swimmers entered and finished their race prior to the staging of the 2-Mile Swim with a course that was expanded from the 1-Mile Course to a 2-Mile triangular course. The first leg of the swim required swimming directly into the wind and over the waves churned up by the strong gusty winds. The worst phase of the swim for both races was the second leg requiring swimmers to swim across the white caps and sideways

with the wind pushing us off course. The final third leg of the swim was less challenging thanks to having the wind at our back for the final stretch to the finish area.

Normally, this 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 2019 Great Chesapeake Bay Swim approach the Kent Island finish line.

There were 553 swimmers who finished the 2019 2-Mile Swim this year as compared with 532 swimmers who completed the 2018 GCBS swim. Another 243 swimmers competed in the One Mile Challenge as compared to the 271 swimmers who completed the 2018 One Mile Challenge Swim. We swam in 72 degree water and finished our races as quickly as possible to avoid the incoming weather threatening the waterfront.

According to race director, Chuck Nabit, "There are more than 700 volunteers who manage the GCBS event 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 raises more than \$200,000 for these causes each 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."



The “4Ds” at the finish line the day before the Great Chesapeake Bay Swim – (from left to right) Delia Perez (National Park, NJ), Dave Hirsch (Cape May Court House, NJ), Doug Frohock (Mamora, NJ), and Dave English (Philadelphia, PA) on June 8th 2019.

The latter is the case for Doug Frohock, 68, of Mamora, NJ, who swam in the modified GCBS swim for the 31st 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 24th GCBS swim.

Another repeat swimmer is David Hirsch of Cape May Court House, NJ, who has completed the 4.4 Mile Swim numerous times and now swims every other year. He alternates between the GCBS with the 3-Mile Escape the Cape Swim. Another swimmer, 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 14th 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 novice swimmers as hurdles to overcome.

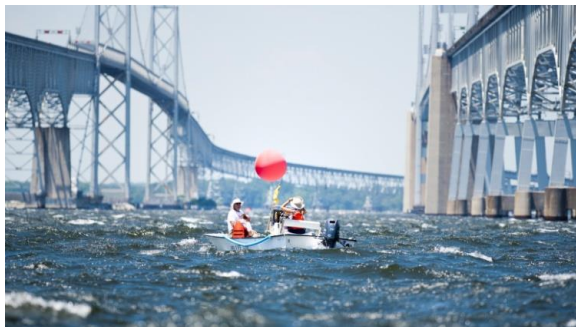
The Great Chesapeake Bay Swim started after Brian Joseph Earley swam across the bay on June 13th 1982, and he dedicated his efforts in memory of his late father Joseph Earley, who died of complications from diabetes.



Kayakers enjoy the early morning calm.



Typical start of the swim near the twin span at GCBS.



Setting the buoy markers along the course.



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

June 29th 2019 and the informal 25th 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) was scheduled to be held in Pleasantville, New Jersey, but was **cancelled** due to thunderstorms. The Donny Fund Day 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 dinner at the Pleasantville Yacht Club.

July 13th 2019 and the 40th Annual Ocean City Beach Patrol's T. John Carey Masters Swim continues to schedule this one-mile ocean swim at 10 a.m. after changing from its original evening venue six 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 comfortable 72-degree ocean water was a plus but once again, the race officials decided to make the swimmers swim north into the southbound current that kept the 162 swimmers (167 swimmers in 2018 and 196 swimmers in 2017) busy navigating the choppy waves and seasickness to the finish.



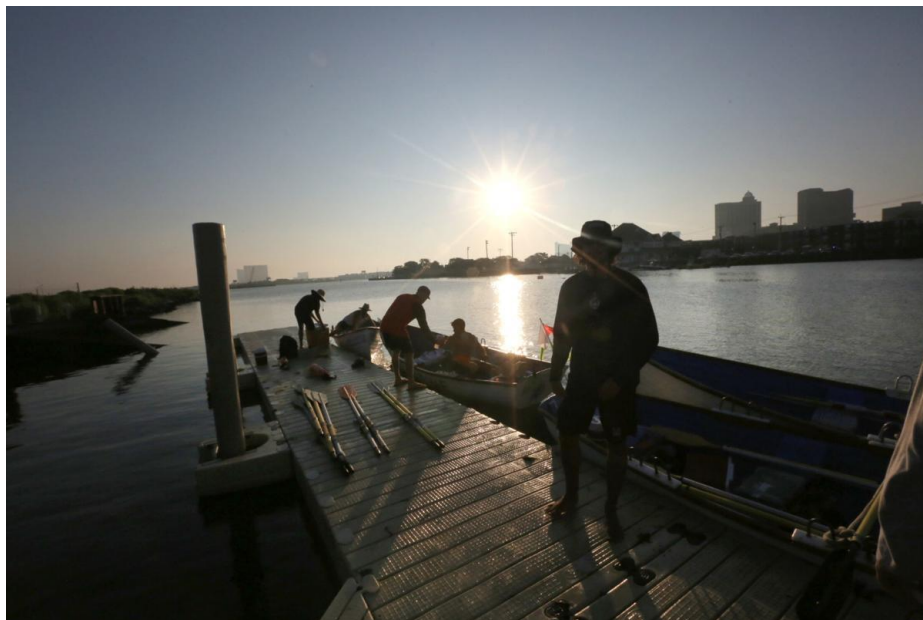
(Left to Right): Rhett Cosgrove (1st Overall), Bill Pugh (age 82 and oldest swimmer), Melanie Cosgrove (age 50 and 1st place females 50-59), Bob Pugh (Bill's son) (age 56 and 1st place males 50-59), Linda Hoke (age 64 and 2nd place females 60 to 64), and Delia Perez (age 67 and 2nd place females 65 and older) at the 2019 OCBP 40th Annual John Carey Masters Swim.

The fastest swimmer in the 2019 T. John Carey One-Mile Master's Swim was Rhett Cosgrove (age 15 – Philadelphia, PA) winning first overall with a time of 20:50 minutes. Melanie Cosgrove (age 50 – Philadelphia, PA) took 1st place in her female 50 to 59 age group and is shown here with her son, Rhett. Bob Pugh (age 56 – Philadelphia and Ocean City, NJ) was the first masters swimmer to finish 9th overall in 22:01 minutes. His father, Bill Pugh (Ocean City, NJ) was the oldest swimmer at 82 years of age and proudly posed with his son, Bob, and his Johnson's Popcorn and oldest swimmer award. Linda Hoke (Philadelphia, PA) won 2nd place in the women's 60 to 64 year age group and maintains her phenomenal presence as an open water swimmer. Delia Perez (National Park, NJ) earned 2nd place for women 65 years & older age and consistently maintains that swimming should be fun! Everyone was happy to display their hardware in their age group finishes in the Annual Masters Swim.

Masters aged swimmers held their own in the Ocean City Master's Swim. Ron Marks (Marmora, NJ) at 60 years of age was the third male masters-aged swimmer finishing 14th overall in 22:26 minutes. Susan Reich (Ocean City, NJ) at 60 years of age was the third masters-aged female swimmer finishing 35th overall in 25:35 minutes and continues to dazzle us all!



July 13th 2019: Kayakers on patrol along the OCBP course for the 38th Annual Ocean City Masters Swim



July 14th 2019: Early morning preparations for the Around the Island Marathon Swim in Atlantic City, New Jersey.

July 14th 2019 and a reconstituted version of the Around the Island Marathon Swim takes place again in Atlantic City, New Jersey. The 36.4km swim course was set and attracted swimmers from the USA, Canada, and England. Since the inception of the Around the Island Marathon Swim in 1953 until 2005, the renewed marathon swim results did very well in comparison to the historic records for the swim. In addition, the Marathon Swim also coincided with the Inaugural Jim Whalen Open Water Festival featuring a 400km and a 2km swim in Atlantic City.

According Ray Peden, an official with USA Swimming, "What was most amazing about this year's event was the average age of the swimmers. They were not young professional swimmers as was the case in the later years of the event. Instead, they were master swimmers who worked a regular 9-to-5 day, Monday thru Friday, and decided to do something beyond the norm of open water swimming. Jim Whelan's widow, Cathy, presented her remarks at the Awards Ceremony stating that she was impressed with the average age of the swimmers in 2019 as compared to past Around the Island Marathon Swims, noting they were much older this year and their determination to finish was amazing to see."



Jim Whelan, was a beloved high school teacher, Mayor of Atlantic City, NJ Assemblyman, NJ State Senator, and Open Water Swimmer

Ray Peden also said, "I heard from several swimmers this year that the inlet was a nightmare due to the current. Once the swim reached the ocean side portion, we were getting reports of swimmers who were very cold and one boat captain noted the ocean temperature registered at 64 degrees. In my opinion, the most impressive event of the day was the winning relay team, known as the Swim RVA Hammerheads and consisting of two swimmers, who donated their \$1,000 dollar winnings back to the Whelan's Whales Swim Team."



Ray Peden starts the Marathon Swim



2019 Marathon Swimmers

Marathon Solo Swimmer Results:

- (1st place) Bill Leonard from Canada (male) (age 40-49) in 8 hr. 23:27 minutes
- (2nd place) Stephen Rouch from USA (male) (age 30-39) in 8 hr.38:37 minutes
- (3rd place) Bryan Hill from USA (male) (age 30-39) in 8 hr. 42:56 minutes
- (4th place) Ryan McCabe from USA (male) (age 30-39) in 8 hr. 43:18 minutes
- (5th place) Michael Gemelli from USA (male) (age 40-49) in 9 hr. 17:23 minutes
- (6th place) Charlotte Brynn from USA (female) (age 50-59) in 9 hr. 31:28 minutes
- (7th place) Juan Acosta from Canada (male) (age 30-39) in 9 hr. 39:31 minutes
- (8th place) Melissa Burroughs from USA (female) (age 20-29) in 9 hr. 41:21 minutes
- (9th place) Victoria Dolceamore from USA (female) (age 50-59) in 10 hr. 39:07 minutes
- (10th place) Beth Jackson from England (female) (age 40-49) in 10 hr. 48:17 minutes
- (11th) Mary Stella from USA (female) (age 40-49) DNF
- (12th) Eric Tucker from USA (male) (age 40-49) DNF

Marathon Relay Team Results:

(1st place) Swim RVA Hammerheads from USA with 2 swimmers in 9 hr. 29:56 minutes

(2nd place) Wildwood Beach Patrol from USA with 5 swimmers in 9 hr. 43:07 minutes

(3rd place) Rouge Waves from USA with 2 swimmers in 10 hr. 11:14 minutes



1st Solo Swimmer – Bill Leonard



1st Female Solo Swimmer – Charlotte Brynn

July 14th 2019 – The 11th 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 13th 2019. 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).



July 20th 2019 and the 18th 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.



Sunrise in Sea Isle, New Jersey



Swimmers finishing the SICBP Ocean Swim

July 20th 2019 and the 6thAnnual 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 after extremely cold (quickly chilling down to 52 degrees) water conditions due to an abrupt drop in water temperature caused by the west winds. Today's 70-degree ocean water was warm enough and the ocean conditions were very calm for the swimmers. Today's swim was "easy peasy" as compared to last year's 20 mph winds from the East that created big waves and "washing machine" conditions for "endless survival swim" to the finish. Anyone who actually finished the 2018 Swim had 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 6thAnnual 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 swim attracted 230 swimmers (as compared to 180 swimmers in 2018 and 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. Results are available at www.runsignup.com



View of the surf in Longport, New Jersey



Delia Perez, Dave Hirsch and Don Walsh

July 27th 2019 and the Captain Turner Ocean Swim was held at 6:30 p.m. in Longport, NJ. The evening was very pleasant and the ocean was a little choppy with the wind but the water was a comfortable 72 degrees. Delia Perez (National Park, NJ) had just returned from England the evening before the swim but still drove to the shore to enjoy the Half-Mile Swim with friends. Just as we started to enter the water, Delia's goggle strap clip slipped off and fell in the water. Everyone else was swimming to the first buoy and Delia was holding her goggles in her hands. Fortunately, Steve DelMonte, who was timing the race, helped Delia secure the goggles by knotting the strap. She entered the water four or five minutes after everyone else, and finished 84th out of 84 swimmers that night. It was a beautiful evening for a swim and wonderful to see some of the usual suspects such as Steve Gazsi, Dave Hirsch, George Theiler, Bill Brooks, Polly Theiler, Don Walsh, and Douglas Farrell who has helped to promote the swim as a fundraiser for multiple myeloma patients and research.

August 3rd 2019 and the 5th Annual Pier to Pier Challenge kicked off Saturday, August 3rd at 6:30pm in Wildwood, New Jersey. For the third year in a row, the early evening weather conditions offered swimmers sunny skies but enough winds to keep the ocean waters choppy for this enjoyable evening swim in Wildwood, New Jersey. Ocean conditions were fairly calm with a slight current running south. It was a beautiful evening for an ocean swim as we enjoyed the 73-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. As the sun sets in the west, the biggest challenge is sighting correctly back into shore with the sun obscuring most of the in-water sighting on buoys. Fortunately, there are sufficient on-shore flags to guide the swimmer back to both on shore destinations. 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 147 swimmers as compared to 120 swimmers in 2018, and 80 swimmers in 2017 who participated in the Pier to Pier Challenge. There are usually family groups who swim together with their children for their first ocean competition. The Pier to Pier Challenge includes age groups ranging from 10 years and younger to 70 plus. Billy Auty hired a timing service using ankle chip bracelets for accurate swim results. It's a great swim to enjoy with friends and share this unique swimming experience.



Chris Neuman, Chris White, Doug Bergen, Will Morey, Dave Hirsch, and Delia Perez on the Wildwood beach.



Dave Hirsch, Will Morey, Billy Auty (Race Director) and Delia Perez on the Wildwood beach.

August 10th 2019 and the 35th 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).





Start of the 2019 Pageant Swim in Atlantic City, New Jersey

August 17th 2019 and the 90th Annual Pageant Swim was held in Atlantic City. Seahawks Swimming hosted the 90th Pageant Swim in conjunction with USA Swimming to ensure the continuance of this historic swim. Concessions were made to the Atlantic City local government including rescheduling the date of the swim in mid-August 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 1¼ Miles (2K) Ocean Swim.

Race organizers 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. 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 now follows a 1¼-Mile course along the Atlantic City beach, ending just south of Jim Whelan Boardwalk Hall at Albany Avenue beach. The swim starts at 10 a.m. on the Michigan Avenue beach and continues to honor the memory of 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 always swam in the annual Pageant Swim.

The 90th Pageant Swim finally started at 10:20 a.m. and the swimmers had a slight southbound current towards the finish. Unfortunately, the winds were heading north and the ocean waves kept pushing swimmers towards shore requiring constant diligence to remain on course. The water temperature was 74 degrees allowing swimmers to remain comfortable while battling the bouncy waves and difficulty sighting the course towards the finish, causing seasick swimmers to suffer!

In 2017, when the Pageant Swim was reactivated, there were a total of 57 swimmers and there were 80 swimmers who participated in the 2018 Pageant Swim. Today's Pageant Swim hosted 95 swimmers. In lieu of awards, trophies, or ribbons for age group winners,

Johnson Popcorn, in three different sizes, were awarded to these age group winners. Madison Kolessar (age 17) finished in 1st place overall and was the first female swimmer who finished in 25:59 minutes. Dylan DeWitt (age 14) finished in 5th place overall and was the first male swimmer who finished in 27:09 minutes.



After the 90th Pageant Swim (left to right): Delia Perez, Molly Williamson, Linda Hoke, Aliza Schmidt, Ray McKendall, Jennifer Muller, Polly and George Theiler on the beach in Atlantic City, New Jersey.

August 25th 2019 and the Elks Club in Brigantine, NJ, held the Bayfest Swim that morning in the back-bay behind the club. Due to inclement weather conditions, the race distance was shortened from a mile to approximately three-quarters of a mile swim course. A total of 37 swimmers (in 2017 and 2018 there were only 27 swimmers) participated (11 swimmers were less than 20 years of age) (another 16 swimmers were between 20 and 60 years of age) (and 10 swimmers were 60 years and older). For results, contact Robin Taylor (rtaylor345@comcast.net).



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



Finish Area for Cedar Island 5K Swim



August 25th 2019 and the 9thAnnual 5K Cedar Island Swim in Avalon, New Jersey, treated 213 swimmers to an especially challenging swim around Cedar Island in 72-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 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 extremely challenging with the 20-mph Northeast winds churning up the waves throughout the swim. As we entered the back-bay water by the Avalon Yacht Club, we were briefly sheltered as we approached the channel and turned left with the winds behind us but swam with the surf while trying to avoid swimming on top of the marshy areas. At we turned into the second leg of the course, the winds pelted us with waves as we swam sideways to the wind and encountered clumps of marsh grass clustered in the water and we navigated the bouncy waves along this stretch of the course. At the third turn, we now swam directly into the wind and waves but started picking up a slight push with the outgoing tide. The final turn provided the most protection from the wind as we swam along the dock areas for our final approach to the finish back at the Yacht Club.

The 5K Cedar Island Swim typically “herds” swimmers at the first turn 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 feels like a full-contact sport with punches to the head. The congestion eases up during the second leg and many swimmers wear 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 winds and waves. 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 the 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 213 swimmers (the ever expanding event closed at 250 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 pizza and amazing cream puff pastries. For the fourth 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 it 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 17 – Egg Harbor, NJ) finished 1st overall and 1st male in 46:29 minutes. Kaitlyn Crouthamel (age 14 – Cape May, NJ) finished 8th overall and 1st female in 55:05 minutes. Ron Marks (age 60 – Mamora, NJ) was the first male masters swimmer to finish 3rd overall in 51:46 minutes and Gudrun Graesser (age 57 – Wayne, PA) was the first female masters swimmer to finish 17th overall in 59:39 minutes.

The 2019 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 now attract fewer swimmers than in previous years – and sadly, the Yates Swim is no more but the Captain Turner returned to its evening venue. Perhaps the impact of scheduling triathlon events early in the morning along with diminishing sponsorships for these swims also reduces swimmer participation. The increasing number of new swimming venues available within our local area lures swimmers from the historically long-standing swims at the South Jersey shore. As a testament to these traditions, the Around Island Marathon Swim returned to Atlantic City and the Pageant Swim celebrated its 90th Anniversary as the oldest open water swim in the country. Sea Hawks Swimming now manages the Pageant Swim after the Atlantic City Beach Patrol could no longer assign limited resources to manage this historic swim and USA Swimming has 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 1¼ Mile Ocean Swim. However, purists of the swim remain disappointed with the change in course, swim venue, and scheduling for this historic ocean swim.



***Remembering Kuni Mihara – his morning swim in Birchwood Lake (Medford NJ) on August 23rd 2016
6/15/1940 to 9/12/2018***

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

9th September 2019

“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.