

2023 Open Water Swim Season Summary
Delia G. Perez – Open Water Representative
Delaware Valley Local Masters Swim Committee

The 2023 Open Water Swim Season offered more of the usual swim events this summer and swim enthusiasts enjoyed moderate to warm ocean water temperatures this season. Given the unexpected shark sightings off the coast of New Jersey and New York, swimming in the back bays and river swim events are enjoying more popularity too.

May 28th 2023 and these season-opener swims also begin with the 66th Annual Navesink Swims (.8 or 1.6 or 2.4 miles) in the Navesink River attracted 276 participants as compared to 234 swimmers in 2022. This early season swim is a favorite among local swimmers and worth the drive to participate. Lynn Dunn (Seaside Park, New Jersey) suggests adding additional buoys along the course because with two heats in the water, it's safe to have staggered distances instead of using the same course with the different distances. Given her 30 years of open water swimming, this year was the first time she had a head on collision with another swimmer who was eagerly starting out on the 1.2 Mile Course as she was returning from her 2.4 Mile Course. Lynn still loves the event but safety is paramount. Results can be found at: <https://raceforum.com/navesink>

May 28th 2023 and the 35th Annual Jim McDonnell Lake Swims included 144 swimmers in the One-Mile Swim and 124 swimmers in the Two-Mile Swim held in Lake Audubon, Reston, Virginia. Additional race information and results found at <https://www.restonmasters.com/jmls-lake-swim/event-results/>

June 10th-11th 2023 and the 10th Annual DeSatnick Real Estate Escape the Cape Triathlon includes a One-Mile Swim in Cape May with a jump off the Cape May/Lewes ferry. Ever since its inception in 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. This year, they no longer offered the option to just enter for the swim portion of the triathlon. Results can be found at: www.DelMoSports.com or <https://runsignup.com/Race/Results/55610>



June 10th 2023 “Eve of the Chesapeake Bay Swim Ritual” (left to right): Dave English (Swedesboro, NJ), Delia Perez (National Park, NJ) and Doug Frohock (Mamora, NJ) at the finishing area for a final check on conditions.

June 11th 2023 and the annual Great Chesapeake Bay Swim held nearby Annapolis, Maryland, once again hosted the 4.4 Mile Swim and One Mile Bay Challenge Swim. Lin-Mark no longer manages these swims and a new group is now responsible for the long-standing event but still have lots to learn about managing a good swim experience – such as sufficient portable toilets, overcrowded finishing area, late day award ceremony, etc. There were a total of 495 4.4 Mile Swimmers (as compared to 485 in 2022) and 264 One Mile Bay Challenge Swimmers (as compared to 148 in 2022) who completed their assigned swims. The water temperature hovered at a comfortable 70° but the winds created tough choppy conditions for both swims throughout the day. Results can be found at ...

<https://runsignup.com/Race/MD/StevensvilleLibbysCostalKitchen/2023GreatChesapeakeBay44MileSwim1MileBayChallenge>



These are swimmers and volunteers affiliated with the Schuylkill Triathlon Club who participated in the Steelman Lake Nockamixon Swim Challenge on June 25th. Top row (L to R): Pattie Hall-Sweigart, Tanya Perova, Ann Marie Johnson, William Kuttruf, Jeff Rake, Rob Bedford, Lin Malott ... Middle row (L to R): Jane Bergan, Amy Liu, Monique St. John, Diane McManus, Danielle Moore, John Shoen, Bill Conn, David Freiberg, Heather Hodges ... Bottom row (L to R): Linda Barton, Rebecca Griffin, Peter Shauger, Justin Coale, Karl Escher, Dana Clarke, Gokhan Seker, Lori Moran, Denise Escher, Brian Akamine

June 25th 2023 and the Steelman Racing 15th Annual Nockamixon Swim Challenge at Nockamixon State Park, Pennsylvania. In addition to solo swimmers, six relay teams from the Schuylkill Triathlon Club competed in the 3-Mile Relay swim with clever names: FCR Dragons, iSwim4 (a charitable organization that aids recovery from substance abuse), Speedy Dolphins, The Leftouts, Not Fast But Furious, and Schuylkill Ducks. John Shoen had the honor of towing the **Schuylkill Ducky** for this latter team and this year, unlike last, kept a short leash on the ducky all the way across the finish line. While the early forecast was dicey, a window of sunshine shown down on the event, with storms moving in only as the event closed down. Way to get it done!



It was a very pleasant day for a swim with a comfortable 76° water temperature with little wind and calm waters. According to Barbara Burke with Delaware Valley Local Masters Swim Club, the individuals listed below are swimmers she knows who are DV LMSC members – there may have been other members who swam at well that she wasn't sure if they were affiliated as DVLMSC members or not.

For the 2 Mile Swim NON-WETSUIT Female Division: 1st place overall went to Laurie Hug and the 1st place for 60 to 69 years of age went to Barbara Burke. In the 2 Mile Swim WETSUIT Female Division: 3rd place for 50 to 59 years of age went to Michele Pollio and in the 50 to 69 years of age went to Denise Pody. In the 3 Mile Swim NON-WETSUIT Female Division: 1st place for 30 to 39 years of age went to Dannelly Beck and 1st place for 60 to 69 years of age went to Vibeke Swanson. In the 3 Mile Swim NON-WETSUIT Male Division: 1st place for 60 to 69 years of age went to Dan Allen and 9th place for 50 to 59 year of age went to Chris Lebold.



Pre-race (left to right): Denise Pody, Barbara Burke, Laurie Hug, and Michele Pollio.



Post-race (left to right) and going for ice cream tradition: Vikye Swanson, Laurie Hug, Dan Allen, and Barbara Burke.

Results for the various swim (1 Mile wetsuit or non-wetsuit, 2 Mile wetsuit or non-wetsuit, and 3 Mile relay) categories can be found at:

<https://runsignup.com/Race/Results/82221#resultSetId-389468;perpage:100> and <https://www.steelmanracing.com/nockamixonswimchallenge>

July 8th 2023 and the **Poverty to Cove 2.4-Mile Swim** in Cape May began as a “free” swim among friends in this invitation-only gathering previously held early in the morning (6:30 a.m.) and was lots of fun to swim with the best tides and currents south down the beach. DelMoSports capitalized on this “friendly” insider swim that was “free” and open to all. Next, swimmers had to “pay to play,” while DelMoSports sets its sights on charging swimmers big fees after years of learning just how much triathletes are willing to pay for their “sports of choice.” Last year, the swim was renamed as the DeSatnick Real Estate Poverty to Cove 2.4 Mile Swim presented by Inspira Health and resulted in more sponsor revenue for DelMoSports. But this year, DelMoSports transferred ownership of the Poverty to Cove 2.4 Mile Open Water Swim to the Cape May Beach Patrol. The Cape May Lifeguard Association will receive 100% of the proceeds from this event. This year’s “pay to play” swim started at 8 a.m. on the Saturday morning following the 4th of July holiday. The 2.4-Mile Swim attracted 128 swimmers as compared to 230 swimmers in 2022. Results can be found at: www.DelMoSports.co or <https://runsignup.com/Race/NJ/CapeMay/PovertyToCove24MileSwim>

July 8th 2023 and the 43rd Annual Ocean City Beach Patrol’s T. John Carey Masters Swim was held in Ocean City, New Jersey, with a preregistration fee of \$25.00 for swimmers. The 2023 Masters Swim was a pleasant swim this year with a comfortable ocean temperature averaging 70 degrees. This year, the race organizers finally headed the wisdom of seasoned ocean swimmers and allowed wetsuits to be wore without disqualifying the swimmer.



Dunn and Frohock & Spectre the horse



William Henry Pugh IV

Swimmers Lynne Dunn (Seasick Park, NJ) and Doug Frohock (Mamora, NJ) pose with Spectre the horse and a Cape May County mounted sheriff officer after the Ocean City Masters Swim in Ocean City, NJ. This year, the OCMS was held in memory of Bill Pugh (1937 – 2023), who swam in the OCMS more than 35 times. He last swam in July 2021 dominating his age group at 84 years of age!

There was a notable absence at the T. John Carey Master's Swim, the one-mile ocean race from the 42nd Street beach to the finish at 34th Street. Ocean City's Bill Pugh, who had been a fixture at the races for years, swimming well into his 80s, died earlier this year on May 23rd 2023. A poster memorializing him was at the 34th Street lifeguard station for those who didn't know him, but many of the longtime competitors didn't need a poster to remember Pugh, who was often the oldest swimmer in the race. Many of the seasoned swimmers remembered Bill Pugh and were pleased the swim was being held in his honor this year. And unlike Pugh, who challenged himself for fun, the competitive aspect belongs to the young. The OCMS is a master's swim for all ages. The annual swim attracts a range of swimmers from young to old who enjoy it, as evidenced by Bill Pugh. Allyson Adams of Olney, Md., 58, was one of the first to get to the 42nd Street beach on Saturday morning, well ahead of the 10 a.m. start. "I get here early and I walk the beach to the start," she said. The Master's Swim "is a little more challenging than the pool where I normally swim. I really like open water. I like this race. I've done it a lot. I grew up in New Jersey but I live in Maryland and come up from there for it."

Ron Marks, 64, of Beesleys Point, was second in his age group and eighth overall. He is a veteran of the OCMS as well as a pool competitor in U.S. Master's Swimming. He's swam it more than 30 times and keeps coming back because he was on the beach patrol and as an alumnus "you've got to do it." Obviously, it's different than pool and according to Ron, "It's my annual 'I have to do well for the Ocean City boys' open-water swim."

A total of 88 swimmers were listed in the final results that can be found at:

https://my.raceresult.com/249483/results#1_61E9DE

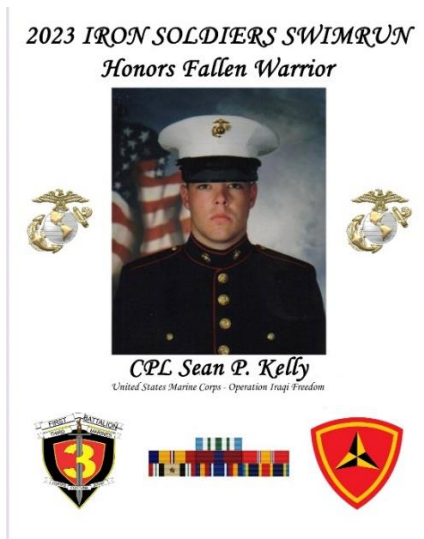


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Official start of the 43rd Masters Swim – July 8th 2023 in Ocean City, NJ

Traditionally, the Masters Swim was always held in the evening at 6 p.m. with as many as 250 swimmers participating. But, as a morning swim, it's no longer as well attended and the current race organizers are still learning how to best manage this open-water swim event.

July 8th 2023 and the 22nd Annual Ocean City Iron Soldiers Swim & Run Biathlon fundraiser was held in Ocean City, NJ, starting at 6 pm at 28th Street and the Beach for a ¾ Mile Ocean Swim. This is an invitation only swim open to the first 100 entrants. Please email **Freddie Klevan** (Fred.klevan@comcast.net) to confirm your entry.



HONORING A LOCAL FALLEN WARRIOR

Marine CPL Sean P. Kelly of Pitman, NJ. Marine CPL Sean P. Kelly, age 23 was killed in action January 26th 2005, when the CH-53E transport helicopter crashed near Ar Rutbah

in Iraq. He was assigned to the 1st Battalion, 3rd Regiment, 3rd Marine Division and 3rd Expeditionary Force. Sean grew up in Pitman and was a graduate of Pitman High School Class of 2000, where he was a standout football player and wrestler. He entered the U.S. Marine Corps in December 2001. Sean was an avid sports fan and loved life. Many participants say this night is one of the highlights of their summer and they try to make everything extra special for everyone involved, especially the family of CPL Kelly.



Delia Perez (left) with 1.2-Mile Race Director, Midge Kerr

July 9th 2023 – The 1.2 Mile Swim is the first swim in a series of three hosted by Tim Kerr Charities in the back bay of Avalon, New Jersey. The 1.2 Mile Swim starts at 20th Street and finishes at the Avalon Yacht Club. Race Director, Midge Kerr, tries to cap the number of swimmers at 120 but today, there were 140 swimmers in the field. Water conditions were very pleasant with a 74-degree water temperature and SW 15 mph winds at our back until we turned west into the wind and some choppy water for the final leg to the finish. It was a delightful afternoon swim (2:30 pm start) and a pleasant afternoon well spent with friends! Results can be found at: [1.2 Mile Bay Swim Results \(runsignup.com\)](https://runsignup.com)



Sea Isle City 1 Mile Ocean Swim – First Heat – All Male Swimmers

July 22nd 2023 and the 10th Annual Sea Isle City Beach Patrol 1 Mile Ocean Swim was held in Sea Isle City, NJ. Swimmers preregister with a fee of \$25.00 and that is a bargain price these days. Swimmers are bused to the start of the 11 a.m. swim and the ocean conditions were very comfortable this year. The swim went off in two heats – the first heat for male swimmers and the second heat for female swimmers. There were 223 swimmers who finished this year as compared to 205 in 2022. The overall swim results found at: <https://runsignup.com/Race/Results/72032/#resultSetId-393726;perpage:100>



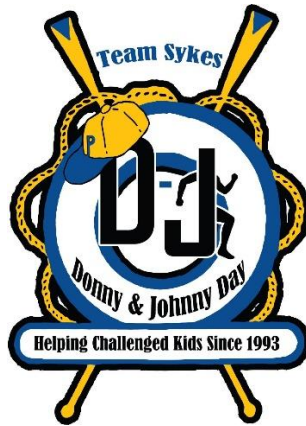
Sea Isle City 1 Mile Ocean Swim – Second Heat – All Female Swimmers



Father and Son finishing the Sea Isle City Swim (left) Dave Hirsch (Cape May Court House, NJ) and Jonathan Hirsch (Burbank, California)



Sea Isle City One Mile Ocean Swim Course



July 29th 2023 and the informal 29th Annual Donny Fund Day and navigate a three-mile course on Lakes Bay (3 Mile Swim, Kayak, or Paddle Surf across Lakes Bay or 5K Run or Walk along the shore of Lakes Bay). It is held at the Yacht Club of Pleasantville in Pleasantville, New Jersey. 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>

July 30th 2023 and this reconstituted version now held as the 4th Annual Jim Whelan Around the Island Marathon Swim in Atlantic City, New Jersey, was held in the Atlantic City waters.



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

The organizing committee for the 4th annual Jim Whelan Open Water Festival hosted the 57th Around the Island Swim® – 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.

The event hosted by Green Whales, Inc. of Brigantine for the second year, honors the late New Jersey Senator and mayor, who was an Atlantic City lifeguard, teacher and swimming coach at Atlantic City High School. The 22.75-mile marathon swim around Absecon Island started and ended at the Atlantic City High School boathouse on Fairmount Avenue.



According to the Green Whales, the Around the Island Swim started as a \$100 bet between two beach patrol members and became one of the premier open water events in the world. After a hiatus, the Whales resurrected the race in 2019 as part of the Jim Whelan Open Water Festival, which raises money for youth swimming education.

August 5th 2023 and the 94th Pageant Swim was held in Atlantic City. With a preregistered fee of \$40.00, the Seahawks Swimming hosted the 94th 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 but only 75 swimmers finished the challenging course due to the waves and current.

The reconstituted Pageant Swim now starts at 9 a.m. but the 1.2 Mile Swim can actually be a longer swim due to currents and waves affecting the course marker buoys. Some swimmers had difficulty getting out in the surf but the 71-degree water temperatures certainly made it more pleasant for swimming. The traditional Pageant Swim was set along a 1.5 Mile course as a simple parallel swim from north to south. The "box course" lends itself to tougher swims because swimmers will swim into the current at some point along the course. Many seasoned swimmers prefer the traditional course and hope race organizers will return to the historic Pageant Swim course – if so, swimmer participation will increase again. Results can be found at: <https://www.raceforum.com/acswim>

August 5th 2023 and the 8th Annual Pier to Pier Challenge was held in Wildwood, New Jersey. There is a preregistration fee of \$30.00 and unfortunately, no parking on the beach in Wildwood this year. The swim usually offers a family-friendly evening swim in the ocean and this year was no exception. The ocean conditions at 6:30 p.m. were a comfortable 72° for the 70 swimmers who needed to navigate breaking waves over the sandbar and a strong south-bound current that added to a pleasant evening swim. Given the unique course design, swimmers had to navigate in-and-out through the waves and over the sand bar twice. Race Director, Bill Auty, with the Wildwood Beach Patrol always hosts a family-friendly evening Pier to Pier Swim and results can be found at: <https://my.raceresult.com/255410/>



**Race Director
Bill Auty**



**Delia Perez with
Diane McVey (right),
a swimmer and local
volunteer.**



**Allison Adams (Olney, MD)(right)
was 3rd for women 50-59 age group,
and Delia Perez (National Park, NJ)
took 2nd for women 60 plus.**



The "Victory at Sea" crew with their Pier-to-Pier Swim Challenge team award on the beach and included me (front row right) to pose with them! Standing (left to right) are Dan Watkins, David Hirsch, Joe Ragni, and Amy and Dennis Schlereth. Kneeling (left to right) are Will Morey, Dan McConnell, and Delia Perez.



MID SUMMER MILE

Lavallette Ocean Swim

August 12th 2023 and the 39th Annual Mid-Summer Lavallette Ocean Swim was held at 8 a.m. This year 77 swimmers finished the swim as compared to 84 swimmers in 2022. See results at: <http://lavallette.org/beach/mileswim.html>

August 20th 2023 and the 13th Annual 5K Cedar Island Swim in Avalon, New Jersey, treated 229 (237 in 2022) swimmers to another interesting adventure swim around Cedar Island in 74-degree water. There were approximately 250 registered swimmers but only 229 completed the course. The Cedar Island 5K Swim remains my personal favorite these days especially with the loss of the original 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. It was a very warm and sunny morning, and smart swimmers stayed in the shade before the 10:55 a.m. start of the swim.

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.



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



Smart swimmers in the shade: (left to right) Lynne Dunne (Seaside Park, NJ), Doug Frohock (Mamora, NJ), and Delia Perez (National Park, NJ) before the 5K Cedar Island Swim.



New 3-Ladder Finish for the Cedar Island Swim

The 13th Annual 5K Cedar Island Swim hosted its usual “flailing arms and legs” in-water start with almost 250 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 first leg was the toughest as we swim into an incoming tide and directly into SW winds at 9 mph. This made the first leg extra bouncy along with the waves caused by passing boaters in the channel parallel to the first leg of the course. The traditional champagne sip is usually 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 had the toughest swim and once we rounded the second buoy for the second leg, we headed into the slightly outgoing tide. By the third leg, we finally found a little push with the slightly outgoing tide and as we turned into the final fourth leg of the course, we found the outgoing tide for a much-needed extra push to the finish back at the Avalon Yacht Club. Unfortunately, in the final stretch of the course, we swam directing into the west wind creating choppy conditions and difficulty sighting the finish area. And new this year, two extra ladders were added to the floating dock allowing swimmers to exit the water much faster instead of lining up to access a single ladder.

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. The after-swim refreshments included pizza and the locally-made amazing cream puff pastries were also available after the swim along with Athletic non-alcoholic beer! Chip timing was used for the swimmers and the results were eventually posted on the Kerr Charities website at <https://runsignup.com/Race/Results/31081#resultSetId-399614;perpage:100>

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 awarded to just the top five overall male and female swimmers and grand masters. Thankfully, Midge maintains her original concept for the 5K Cedar Island Swim with awards for top 5 male and female overall, masters, and grandmasters only. After a trial run to include age group awards in 2021, Midge saw the combativeness as a disaster for this much beloved swim!!! Midge said, “We are staying with no age group awards after trying it in 2021 for the first time. It just changed the dynamics and vibe of our swim. We embrace being with like-minded people for the **joy of swimming** and making a difference in our community.”

Awards were given to top finishers individually with the benefit of a crowd of cheering on the swimmers. Luke Brennen (age 17 – Trenton, NJ) finished 1st overall and 1st male in 46:43 minutes (about 1 minute slower than his time last year). And Tiffany Brennen (age 45 – Trenton, NJ) finished 7th overall and 1st female in 50:12 minutes (7 seconds slower than her time last year).



Race Director, Midge Kerr (left), with Delia Perez



(Left to right) Tim (stand-up paddle board volunteer) with Carolin Malott (Norristown, PA), Lynne Dunn (Seaside Park, NJ) and Delia Perez (National Park, NJ)

September 16th 2023 – Point to Point Swim is the third swim in a series hosted by Tim Kerr Charities in the back bay of Avalon, New Jersey. The 1.2 Mile Swim starts at 23rd Street and finishes at the Avalon Yacht Club. Race Director, Midge Kerr, who is personally promoting the “**joy of swimming**,” and not racing, usually caps the number of swimmers at 120 and today there were 121 swimmers in the field. Water conditions were comfortable with a pleasant 72-degree water temperature but uncooperative NW and WNW 15 mph winds in our face throughout the swim. The swim course was choppy and bouncy, and when we turned into the final leg to the finish, the only saving grace was the outgoing tide that finally gave us an extra push over the choppy waves back to the Yacht Club. It was a tough morning swim (9:30 a.m. start) but a good swim marking the end of the open water swimming season at the South Jersey Shore. [POINT TO POINT BAY SWIM Results \(runsignup.com\)](https://runsignup.com)

September 23rd 2023 and the September Splash Swims (1-Mile and 2-Miles) were cancelled due to Hurricane Ophelia. Typically held in Sunset Lake at 9 a.m. in the back-bay waters of Wildwood Crest, New Jersey, these swims are now only promoted within the community and participation is limited to local swimmers and youth swim teams only.

May through September 2023 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. Results may be found at ... <https://frenchcreekracing.com/wp-content/uploads/2023-Open-Water-Series-ALL-RESULTS.pdf>

We cannot change challenging conditions or ensure the things we love will last forever. But as 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, her "keep on swimming" bracelet inspires us to remember – "Life can be as hard to live as swimming against the tide. Even in 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

22nd October 2023

"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.