



SPM NEWSLETTER

St. Petersburg Masters | North Shore Aquatic Complex

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A Huge Thank YOU!



Socially distanced NSAC Staff Meeting (photo: G. Parsley)

We've always known that we are lucky to be able to swim at one of the best pools in the country with a stunning view and incredible lifeguards and staff. But it has never been more evident that North Shore Aquatic Center is a premier establishment in every sense of the word, than during this period.

Back on Tuesday, March 17, as the number of COVID-19 cases and deaths were rising, NSAC closed to the

public indefinitely. Without our chlorinated oasis, we found various other activities to keep us active and busy while quarantining, but we all missed our home away from home.

A rigorous plan devised by Rebecca Hansen and NSAC staff, was accepted by the City. On May 1, we received the wonderful news that North Shore would be reopening on Monday, May 4. Under a most thoughtful and orderly plan with safety at the forefront, we would be able to sign up for 45 minute time slots to enjoy our time in the water and work out. Each swimmer was assigned a lane, with odd and even lanes starting at opposite ends of the pool and well-defined entrance and exit paths to adhere to social distancing guidelines. Pool hours were extended to maximize lane availability, and the pool staff did an amazing job implementing the plan!

A big thank you from the bottom of our hearts to Rebecca Hansen, Gary Parsley, Emily Aron, Spencer McDermott, Sabrene Ahmad, Troy Bielicki, Kory Blair, Delaney Booth, Jakob Christophersen, Daniel Colleton, Katherine Eaton, John Hays, Tyre Hill, Dillon Hubbard, Wesley, Hudson, Elma Ibrahimovic, Clarke Jacobson, Margaret Jacobson, Alexandra Kerrigan, Kaitlin Kerrigan, Elizabeth Lewis, Michael Longino, Emma Miller, Josh Morehouse, Kaeleigh Morehouse, Kalee Parmentier, Haley Phipps, Clara Pitzer, Alberta Quarterman, Colton Ray, Erin Reynolds, Dylan Roach, Zachary Rodriguez, Nandra Ross, Jakob Smith, Providence Span, Ian Witbreuk, and Fred Lewis.



Re-Opening Day at NSAC

SPONSORS



From your teammates

Under normal circumstances, this newsletter would likely have been bustling with news from local swim meets, USMS Nationals, open water events, and triathlons. But 2020 threw us a doozy. Still, during this period of self-isolation and social distancing, your teammates have not been idle.

The competitive spirit remains alive among us even if it takes place in a slightly different form. People got creative and found other ways to exercise when the pool was not available to us. Home projects were completed, books were read, and surgeries performed. It was a time for reflection ... and a proposal!

Thanks to all who took the time to share their stories: Ananda, Bergeron, Bob Beach, Carolyn Kiper, Charlotte Petersen, Chris Swanson, Colleen O'Reilly, Eric Herman, Gary Bastie, Herbert and Patricia Euler, Kim Brackin, Mike Smith, Mike Zabel, Mitchel Hoffman, Peter Betzer, Ron Collins, Phil Harasz, Regina Novak, Sarah Ellison, Sharon Steinmann, Sue Strickland, Susan Tokayer, Tabitha Brandt, Tori Kirkman, Tricia Moses, and Veronica McCumber. Enjoy and stay safe, everyone!

As always, if you have story ideas, please send them over! livia.zien@gmail.com Thanks!

Phil Harasz

Most of us will agree the North Shore Aquatic Complex (NSAC) staff has done an incredible job of providing us with the ability to swim while maximizing our safety. That being said, for some of us, it's not enough. For others, it seems too restrictive. Each of us has a different calculation of personal risk, based not only on our own personal medical situation, but also that of our loved ones. This means no matter what the staff at the NSAC does, it's going to be too risky to some, and overdone to others. Let's all appreciate the difficult position the pool staff is working under and always remember to thank them, be kind and positive, and offer as much praise as you can.



Pull-Ups, Dips, Bench Press—girlie weights are Melissa's (photo: MP Harasz)

As for the pictures of my gym - when faced with adversity, I always remember Clint Eastwood in the movie "Heartbreak Ridge", who constantly says "Improvise, Adapt, and Overcome". So when the gyms closed, I built my own gym in the backyard. When the pools closed, I jumped over the seawall and swam in Tampa Bay. It's the key to surviving this pandemic. Improvise, Adapt, and overcome.

The Eulers



Herbert and Patricia selfies, biking, and refueling (photo: H. and P. Euler)

We are trying to stay fit even though our pool is still closed. The other day, we went on a 25 mile bike tour along the Weser River here in Lower Saxony, Germany. Needless to say, we had to "refuel" with a cold beer at a bike stop. All the best to all the swimmers and hope to see you soon!

- Herbert and Patricia Euler

Judge Bob Beach



Sunrise from Judge Beach's balcony (photo: B. Beach)

Livia recently called me asking what I've been doing to survive the coronavirus attack. I told her that during my "house arrest," I have been sitting on my porch enjoying the view of Tampa Bay (see picture), eating lots of ice cream, and listening to my favorite music from the 1930's and 1940's (Big Band). Also, since I had plenty of free time and will soon be 90 years of age, I was reflecting on my past life which was quite enlightening to me. Livia asked if I would share my life experiences with you, my fellow teammates, and of course I said yes, so here it is.

I was born July 26, 1930 at the height of the Great Depression in Hollywood, CA. My mother, a women's libber before they had a name for it, had just divorced my father whom I never knew. In spite of the hard times, she loved to travel, so my early years were spent in California, Arizona, Illinois, and New Mexico, living in boarding houses, tents, trailers, and garage apartments. During World War II and for some time thereafter, I lived in Santa Monica

where I made many lifelong friends and have great memories.

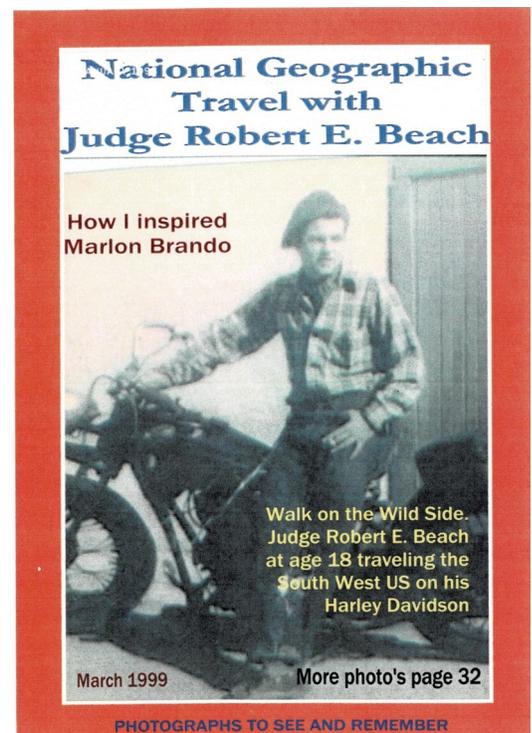
Shortly after high school, I worked in the only liquor store in Malibu, CA for three years where many of my customers were movie stars. When I turned 21 years of age, I became a union bartender and went to work in Las Vegas at the Flamingo Hotel and Benny Binion's Horseshoe Casino. One night, Frank Sinatra bought me a drink. After months of partying and gambling, I decided it was time to get serious about life and the future, so I came to Florida where I got a job at the Chesterfield Show Bar, the best strip joint in Tampa, as a bartender. Shortly thereafter, I enrolled at the University of Tampa where I graduated in 1955 at the bottom of my class with a BA in English and History. Times were tough and the future was uncertain, so I decided to go to Stetson Law School in St. Petersburg where I graduated in 1958 at the bottom of my class. While at Stetson, I worked at Topps Bar on St. Pete Beach and summers in the Adirondacks in upstate New York as a bartender. While working in New York, I was an extra in the 1958 movie *Marjorie Morningstar* in a dance scene starring Gene Kelly and Natalie Wood. In law school, I met and married Shirley, and we had four beautiful children.

After passing the Florida Bar exam, I went to work for a great lawyer, Paul Roney, whom I practiced with for nine years doing civil trial work. I was very active in state and local bar activities as well as local civic activities. In 1968, Governor Claude Kirk appointed me as a Circuit Judge of the Sixth Judicial Circuit where I served for 50 years. During my time as judge, I had a number of high profile cases, served in all divisions of the system, served as Chief Judge and was active in the Circuit Judges Conference. Serving as a Circuit Judge was a great experience of which I'm very proud.

I inherited my love of travel from my mother. While in California, I had a Harley Davidson motorcycle. I rode all over California, Arizona, and into Mexico. One of my memorable trips was in 1954 when I hitch-hiked from Tampa to Los Angeles and then to North Conway, NH spending about \$40. I've camped in all 50 states and some US territories, camped in most of our National Parks and National Monuments, been to all 7 continents, 140 countries, traveled from Moscow to Vladivostok, Russia on the Trans-Siberian Express, hiked to the top of Mt. Kilimanjaro (19,314 ft) in Tanzania, Africa at 70 years of age, trekked 20 days in the Himalayas up to Mt. Everest but not on it, hiked most of the known trails in the Grand Canyon, and hiked the highest sand dunes in the world in Namibia, Africa. Also, while in Namibia when I was 86 years old, I duo-parachuted at 10,000 ft. In 1995, I drove from here to Alaska and back and slept in my 1972 Volvo 1800ES classic car the whole way. And lastly, in 1994, I appeared on Broadway in the play, *Beauty and the Beast* at the Palace Theater in New York City as Anton the Egg Man.

But the thing I'm most proud of is I was very fortunate to be one of the founders of Masters Swimming, serving as the first Vice Chairman with Dr. Ransom Arthur as founder and Chairman. Masters Swimming has been very important in my life keeping me in good health and allowing me to have great friendships. In 2015, I was part of a six-man relay to swim 22 miles from Catalina Island to the California mainland. Every member was over the age of 80, and together we set a world's record for the oldest team to swim it. On my 87th birthday, I became the oldest ever person to complete the Alcatraz to San Francisco swim, and the next day I did the Golden Gate Swim, also the oldest ever to complete it.

So, have I been busy during my solitary confinement? You betcha!!!



A picture is worth a 1000 words (photo: B. Beach)

Susan Tokayer

Mandy Zipf and I participated in the Sirens & Merman Triathlon at Siesta Key on June 21. We, however, did not do the triathlon. There were a few different races offered, so we competed in the 1k swim/5k run.

We both placed 1st in our respective divisions. It was a fun morning, and it was great to compete after so many months of cancelled events. The 3k run on the beach was a bit of a struggle, but I was happy to do a run on Father's Day. My father is deceased, but he was a marathon runner, so I thought that a running competition would be a nice way to honor his memory.

During the quarantine, when I couldn't swim, I took up running. So, when this event came up, I thought, why not? I'm also happy to report that everyone did a great job of social distancing.



1st Place finishers! (photo: S. Tokayer)

Mike Smith

In the last newsletter, Mike gave us his rendition of the Coronavirus blues ... in this newsletter, prompted by John Nixon, Mike writes, "John Nixon asked, what about *Imagine*? So I penned him a few lines:

*Imagine there's no Masters,
You couldn't if you tried,
No pools around us,
All the water dry...
Imagine all the Speedos wavin' like flags on high,
You could call me a swimmer,
But I'm not the only one,
Someday I hope you'll join us,
And the sea monkeys will live as one!*



(photo from Jeremy Beck on Unsplash)



And from the last issue:

**HELLO EIGHT-YARD POOL MY FRIEND,
IT'S TIME TO SWIM WITH YOU AGAIN,
YESTERDAY THE GOVERNOR DID DISCLOSE,
THERE ARE NO OPTIONS AND THE POOLS HAVE CLOSED,
THE TAST OF SALT AND SUNBURN,
I STILL GET DIZZY ON THE FREQUENT TURNS, AND YET
I YEARN,
FOR THE END ... OF CORONA.
(TO THE TUNE OF SIMON AND GARFUNKEL'S *THE SOUNDS OF SILENCE*)**

Sue Strickland

I'm a St Pete Masters member and sending you all a big Canadian hug, a photo, and a [short video](#) from our cottage near the Niagara area on Lake Erie taken month ago when our water temperature was around 68F and wet suits were required.

Yesterday the water was up to 73F. The best news for us is that our outdoor pools have just started to reopen in Toronto, and we can't wait to get back into the chlorine although fresh water swim is awesome this time of year too.

Stay well and I hope to be able to travel back to Florida soon!



Lake Erie, Niagara area (photo: S. Strickland)



(photo: R. Collins)

Ron Collins

Ron Collins has been swimming and prone paddling in isolation. He's been posting videos at [Youtube.com/RonCollins](https://www.youtube.com/RonCollins) as he gained access to open waters and has been training non-stop during the hiatus. On June 18th, a jet ski renter from Clearwater Beach collided with him but only the board was damaged. On June 30th, he got a new right knee so he'll likely be moving to the Stroke Group to train breaststroke with Livia. :)



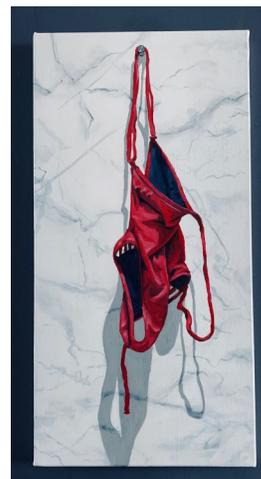
(photo: R. Collins)



(photo: R. Collins)

Tricia Moses

How have I been spending my quarantine time? Besides binge watching shows and gaining weight, (thank goodness the pool opened – but I still won't go in to the Pilates studio), I have been painting and painting. One of my paintings is of one of our NSP friends, Alberta Quarterman. I am a member of the Women's Caucus for Art; in honor of the 100 year anniversary of Women's Suffrage my local WCA chapter is curating a portrait exhibition honoring women who work in and contribute to our community. As one of the artists, I selected Alberta for my subject. Alberta has been greeting me at NSP for years now. I've watched her take care of the comings and goings of all the pool patrons with courtesy and patience. This show of 36 women will debut at the Morean Art Center Aug. 8th through September 26th. The Chapter is also raffling a handmade book of member's art originals, with the winner being announced on Aug. 18th. Visit the Morean, where it is easy to socially distance, and enjoy some art by many different artists. During this same time, I will have another painting there in the Morean Member's show.



Drip Dry (photo: T. Moses)



Alberta Quarterman (photo: T. Moses)

<https://www.moreanartscenter.org/morean-arts-center-upcoming-exhibits/>

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Eric Herman

A slide board mimics speed skating, you slide side to side in place. Just YouTube it. I decided this would be good for my lower half strength and flexibility. I shopped around and the cheap ones weren't that great and the better quality ones were quite expensive. I YouTubed how to make one and saw that I had most of the materials leftover from other projects. So, with my gym closed, and getting a little cabin fever, I decided to build my own slide board.

Materials needed:

- (1) 4'x8' sheet of plywood $\frac{3}{4}$ " thick (\$25-\$35 Home Depot)
- (1) 4'x8' sheet of white board (\$15 Home Depot)
- (1) Roll of Gorilla Grip Original Drawer and Shelf Liner 12"x20' (\$20 Amazon)
- (1) Gallon Contact Cement (\$36 Home Depot)
- (1) Can of spray adhesive (\$10 Home Depot)
- (4) 3/8" bolts and nuts, (8) washers (\$15 Home Depot)
- (1) Pledge Furniture Polish, Orange scent of course (\$4 Publix)
- (1) Pair Proguard Booties for Slide Board (\$9 Amazon)

The platform is made by cutting the plywood 22 inches wide by 90 inches long. Next, cut the white board a little oversized of that dimension, 24 inches wide by 92 inches long. Then laminate the two together with the contact cement, being careful with the placement as the two will bond instantly and very difficult to adjust afterwards. Lastly, use a router with a flush trim bit and cut the white board flush with the plywood.

The two stops are made from three layers of plywood glued together and cut 3 inches wide by 22 inches long. Then mark and drill two holes for the bolts, one on each end. Next, line up, mark, drill, and countersink on the bottom, two holes to match on the platform. I placed one stop on one edge of the platform, then measured and marked so there was 6 feet between each stop, and then another set of marks so there was 7 feet between each stop. You could make as many holes for stops as you want to adjust for different stride lengths. Those were just the two common lengths I found online.

Finally, use the spray adhesive to attach the shelf liner to the bottom of the platform. This will protect your floors and most importantly prevent the platform from moving as you slide side to side. This worked better than I thought it would, there is no slippage. Use pledge to slick the white board surface, put the booties on over a pair of shoes, and you are off to the races.

Surprisingly, 30 minutes will give you a good cardio workout as well. I typically do basic exercises; side to side mimicking speed skating, mountain climbers, side lunges, forward and backward lunges, and other core exercises. Plenty can be found on YouTube on how to buy and build a slide board, as well as the exercises you can perform with one.



Homemade Slideboard (photo: E. Herman)

Carolyn Kiper

Life in the Slow Lane

It's been interesting trying to train during this pandemic. And by interesting, I mean boring.

As a triathlete, it's not so fun to swim, bike, or run by myself. My bike ride is usually with my husband or with friends, with a reasonable physical distance (as opposed to a social distance). I run on my own outside or inside on my treadmill. Having coached at Fit2Run, I still reach out to the run group for our Sunday morning runs. We take pictures of ourselves, at least 6 feet apart, and run within eyesight of each other so we still feel the presence of others.

Swimming. As you know, we have to reserve lanes, with those swimming in odd lanes entering from one side of the pool and those swimming in even lanes entering on the other side of the pool.

My husband, Tim Kennedy, reserves lanes so that we can swim in lanes next to each other. Now he is a "Shark" swimmer and I am a "Fine Wine" swimmer. So we can't exactly work out together.... or can we?

Tim joined me in my "Fine Wine" workout, which is way too slow for him. As we were finishing a 50 and nearing the wall, I looked at him and noticed that he slowed his pace. So I slowed my pace. Then he slowed even more. I slowed even more. Barely an inch from the wall, we both popped up laughing. It reminded both of us of the time we had a contest to see who could keep an "appearance" of form but swim the slowest. In that contest, we were both inches from the wall and basically swimming in place until we both finally gave up due to laughing too hard. I guess we both lost that contest.

The next time we swam, I put on fins and joined Tim in his workout. This included 25's on :30. When we pushed off for the first 25, I was surprised that I could swim easy and still keep pace with him. But I **know** Tim. On the next few 25's, I stayed right with him but would not pull ahead because I knew he would swim faster and make me work harder. And, I also knew what was coming. On the last 25, we pushed off of the wall and he kept going faster, and I kept going faster. Now, it was ON. And I had my good fins on. In the last few yards, I kicked like hell and finally touched him out at the wall. Paybacks, Tim... paybacks.

A couple of weeks later, Tim and I were at the pool, but we had company. With Tim in the center, I was on one side and Chris Burke was on the other. Tim and Chris were doing their workout together, finally leaving me in peace. On the very first set, Tim and Chris pushed off and I started a few seconds later. Nearing the other end, I noticed that Tim suddenly turned. I mean, he flip-turned in the middle of the lane, never touching the wall at the other end. Seriously, who does that? And who knew that you could clearly hear "Doh!" from Chris Burke, even under water!

A few laps later I finished my lap and turned around to see Tim and Chris sprinting to the wall. Then Tim looked at me and asked "Who won?". "I did", I said. "I won". They looked at each other and shrugged, after all, I was already there.

Now, as much as we are enjoying these pool time shenanigans and making the most of life in spite of the pandemic restrictions, I look forward to the return of a regular Masters workout. I can't wait to see the Shark group splashing up a frenzy on one end of the pool, the Stroke group and the Triathlete groups cruising through their workouts. But mostly I want to swim with my Fine Wine group again. After all, "Life is but a fine wine to be sipped and favored". (Pittacus Lore)

Have fun, stay surreal, and stay safe!



Carolyn and Tim in Kona, a less competitive setting (photo: C.Kiper)

Sharon Steinmann

What I Did During My Coronavirus "Vacation"

The corona virus has caused a lot of disruption to our normal daily lives. With the pool shut down and my apparel importing business Shaybali at a standstill, I needed a project to keep me occupied. I wanted to do something productive and realized I had some amazing fabrics and swatches from Bali that could be used for sewing face masks. First I reached out via local neighborhood and city of St. Pete websites that I had these batik fabrics to donate to sewers making masks for essential workers and first responders. I got a lot of takers on that and realized there was a huge need! Next, I reached out via Facebook and Instagram ads to sewers nationally making face masks for donation that I had these fabrics for donation. That response was beyond my wildest dreams! I discovered there was a real shortage of fabrics for masks - especially in rural communities. People were ripping up their sheets and linens to make face masks. The demand was so high that we literally started tearing up old or damaged garments just to accommodate all the requests. We donated over 100 packages of fabric to sewers nationwide! And you may have seen a few of these at the pool as Livia Zien, Sarah Swoch & Christine Swanson were all sewing and donating lots of masks to swimmers and their families at the pool. The face masks have turned into a best selling item now for my company, and we plan to produce many, many more in the future. Face masks are your best defense against the Coronavirus and they are going to be around for a long time!



Swimmer girls in Shaybali masks (photo: S. Steinmann)



(photo: Josh Smith)



(photo: Tori Kirkman)



(photo: Sarah Swoch)



The Hansen family at the pool re-opening (photo: R. Hansen)

Livia Zien

When things first started shutting down, Greg and I thought we'd take some evening walks along Coffee Pot Blvd. Very quickly though, we found ourselves on what seemed like the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade route, so we abandoned that idea. We took to our bikes and found less popular paths Downtown to the Mahaffey parking garage where we did sets of "hill" climbs in the shade! (Still struggling with the Florida summer.)

I started keeping a journal, partly because it's such an unusual time, but mostly because I couldn't remember what I had done from one day to the next. Unfortunately, my journal reads like a broken record, "Got up. Had breakfast. Checked mail. Mini-breakfast time. Checked mail again. Fed kitties. Washed breakfast dishes. Pre-lunch treat. Still no mail. Time for lunch! Surely the mail should be here by now. Post-lunch snack. The mail came! One ad for a home sale, one ad for an internet service provider. Bummer. Oh yeah, I worked. Is it dinner time yet????"



A less crowded sunrise walk



Atop the Mahaffey parking garage

In all seriousness though, one of the positives that has come out of this 'isolation period' is that we ended up using technology to reconnect with friends from all over. We scheduled daily Zoom squat meetings with our friends' kids in Indiana, which kept us more closely connected than in the past. We have had virtual meet ups and phone calls with friends up north in Ottawa, up and down the Atlantic Coast, and out West from Seattle to San Diego ... so even in this socially distanced era, our distance friends didn't feel so far away. And thank goodness for NSAC's re-opening which gave us all a chance to reconnect a little locally.

Here's hoping that someday soon, we will slowly be able to return to some sort of normalcy and hang out with our local friends while staying better connected with our friends all across the country. Stay safe, everyone!

Chris Swanson

My Winter, Spring and Summer vacation ~ 2020

As the corona virus took hold of NC and the nation I spent about 6 weeks prior to the shut down as a volunteer swim instructor to 2nd graders. We kicked off the **Swim for Charlie** program at the end of January. In late February I was already taking precautions at the gym. Wiping down the barre before class and my equipment; rolling my yoga mat differently at the end of class and aside from grabbing my swim bag I stopped using the locker room. Many thought I was being overly cautious, but because I live with someone who has cancer, I have to treat this differently than most. I am retired and have become an active volunteer in NC and all of my weekly volunteering came to a screeching halt in mid-March.

Aside from my garden and a weekly Zoom Barre class my main activity has involved sewing face masks with my own fabric and fabric sent to me by fellow team mate Sharon Steinmann. Lots of you are sporting masks with her Shaybali Fabric and given the numbers in Florida I hope you continue to wear them. I am still sewing face masks as there is still a need and a requirement to wear them in both Durham and Orange counties where we live. **Please be safe and smart and don't pretend it won't or can't happen to you.**

My local pool is indoors and open now but I have agreed with my other half to forego swimming this summer. I did take 2 short swims in the lake, skins in early May. The nearby lake is rather muddy and we had a lot of rain during the spring so there was a lot of runoff. Not an ideal or really safe place to try and workout and now it is too warm. When it cools off in the fall I will try to swim again.

In mid-May I bit the bullet and purchased an inflatable SUP and all the necessary accoutrements. I drive to the lake a couple days a week, with my husband as spotter, and paddle for about an hour each time. I am more comfortable each time out and getting faster as my atrophied shoulders regain muscle tone. I haven't fallen in and even take my 'good' camera (in a dry bag) when wind and weather are appropriate. I am following a family of bald eagles that make their home at the lake along with a heron, egret and a few ospreys. This will be my main cardio workout for the foreseeable future, perhaps through the fall and into the winter. I do have a wetsuit, booties and gloves thanks to the Frogman Swim.

I am cooking a lot as we don't venture out to restaurants to eat or carryout. We really don't live close enough to do this. Baseball season was cancelled so meals in town don't happen. I am dabbling in bread baking and pizza dough making despite the early pandemic flour and yeast shortages. My skills are improving.

I hope the numbers here in NC start trending down so I can make a trip over to western NC and visit with Pam Geiger. I am envious that you are all able to take a dip so many times each week and I hope you all realize how fortunate you are to have that opportunity. Not everyone is blessed to have a North Shore Aquatic Center. So please swim a few laps for me next time you are at the pool.

In good health my friends,

Christine



New toy! (C. Swanson)

Peter Betzer



Over I-275 on 27th Ave N. (photo: P. Betzer)

Susan and I are being spoiled by our youngest daughter, Katherine, who has been with us since early March and is a great chef. We are enjoying her many culinary highlights.

I have been walking about the city in the early morning when almost everyone is still inside their home. It does not produce the same cardio benefits as swimming but it does increase my pulse rate and for those 45 to 90 minutes I am continuously moving. I also have a new TREK bike that I enjoy but I have not ridden it very much.

Although I miss swimming there are some really distinctive homes in our city that I have discovered that are worth viewing on my walks. Some have extensive and tasteful plantings and others include fruit trees (some mango trees have hundreds of fruits - Yum). A few homes have wooden trellises or a pergola. Then too there are homes featuring ceramic tiles and a few have large pieces of metal art in the yard - the large rooster at the corner of 5th Street and 31st Ave North is worth a trip.

Well there is my perspective on walking our city where I have been at a loss without the solid black line marking my route to the end of the street/lap.



Katherine and Peter (photo: P. Betzer)

Colleen O'Reilly



Colleen's new backyard pool (photo: C. O'Reilly)

I thought I might lose my mind after the pool closed. It took me only about five days to injure both knees trying to jog instead of swim, so I found myself without much exercise at all! Trying to solve this desperate situation, it occurred to me that some of my fellow swimmers liked swimming in the Gulf. Wondering if any were doing this, I sent a text to my frequent lane mate, Susan Kujava, and sure enough I was invited to join some Gulf swimmers!

Swimming in the Gulf turned out to be fabulous! The water temp in late March was ideal! The water clarity was exceptional for Pass-a-Grille, and my fellow swimmers informed me that the police had "given us permission to swim, as long as we did not linger on the beach". Perfect! Susan, John

Nixon, Greg Lauwers and I often teamed up as we all preferred to swim along the buoys at Pass-a-Grille as they made sighting and swimming straight very easy. I loved this exercise, and it made me realize how lucky am to live near the Gulf of Mexico. It was also great to get to know more swimmers through this new experience, even at a social distance. I look forward to making Gulf swimming a part of my routine come fall, when the water cools back down and the stingrays leave. Many thanks to Susan and the all the other Gulf swimmers for welcoming me to this new found swimming experience, right in my own "backyard"!

Veronica McCumber and Tabitha Brandt

The Self-Tri Challenge

Veronica: I got so tired of everything being canceled that I raced the full sprint tri at home (I was only supposed to have done the cycling portion). I challenged Tabitha to do it with me (she was supposed to have done the swim) and prove it through pics. Because I didn't have any way to do the swim, I did swim-specific exercises during the entirety of what my swim took at last year's St. Anthony's. I was even a complete tri dork afterward and took my medal down and wore it for a bit. It did make me feel a bit better about things being canceled, and it was awesome Tabitha did it with me in spirit too. I hope to goodness we are all able to compete again soon. I miss my team!



Veronica's full sprint tri challenge (photo: V. McCumber)

Tabitha: The St. Anthony Triathlon was supposed to be fun and painless this year with me doing the swim leg of our relay. Little did I know, I would be tested to the max in a way I never expected to allow myself.

The Covid wave came and tossed us right out of our plans. So, my teammate and biker, Veronica decided to challenge us to do our own individual full Tri on our own at our own paces. Well... I can't pass up a challenge.



Pass-a-Grille waves (photo: T. Brandt)

I woke and was excited about the swim. The weather was beautiful but windy of course and the waves were big. I was excited about at least 1 part of the race. Then getting to Pass-a-Grille and seeing the waves were disheartening. But I couldn't give in. I also couldn't just do the tri distance. So after the 1,000 I got out and drove home to transition into the bike.

For being a virgin triathlete I do feel my transitions were amazing!!! That was the most enjoyable part, I do have to say. My first transition was seamless... drive home, changed, made a protein shake, watch a 30 min show and out I went with my bike. The wind was merciless!! I tried starting out into the wind and the Johns pass bridge killed me. Anyway, I did enjoy the descent! My 2nd transition was great as well. Home, change again, hydrate and an hour later head out for a run/jog with a torn Labrum and bone spurs in my hip.

Well, I did it all and have to say I have increased my already tremendous admiration for triathletes!!

My hats off to all of you!!



Tabitha's bike and run after some great transitions (photo: T. Brandt)

Kim Brackin



Open water swimming (photo: K. Brackin)

While the COVID-19 pandemic has been an upheaval for everyone, I have TRIED to find a bright side. I appreciate the extra time I've had at home with my two teenage kids, the time to finish some home and business projects and honestly, just slowing down mentally and physically. A personal fitness program is important to me, so the three of us immediately started a daily dryland program in our backyard. While the pool was closed, I headed out to Caddy's with the Mad Dogs and did some open water swims with my daughter and her teammates! Coach Fred was awesome to lend us a battle rope and a medicine ball which we added to our TRX, weights and ab routine! I was ecstatic when Rebecca and her NSAC staff came up with a reopening plan that the Mayor could get behind. I'm so impressed with the precautions they have taken while safely getting us in the water.

NSAC opened back up for business, I had all my regulars back plus, a few of my awesome Masters teammates decided to get some technical coaching advice at BEST. It feels so good to have the option to get a daily swim and be back on deck coaching.

Most recently, my husband is back from his 5 month deployment (YAHOOO!) and I am about to start a 5 week training camp, with my best friend, for some swimmers from up North. We've secured 2 hours a day at the St. Pete Beach pool, six days a week, to conduct a technique & training camp. The families have been quarantining here for 2 weeks and we'll have our first workout 7/6. It's cool to see their enthusiasm to get back in the water - I definitely can empathize!

As a coach for over 30 years, one of the personal characteristics I learned to value the most in my athletes is resilience. We all experience road bumps in life, some much more challenging than others; reflecting, regrouping, reinventing are all important when coming back from disappointment. I hope all of you have been able to bounce back from our world turning upside down! I've enjoyed seeing you at the pool...in our separate little lanes! Stay healthy and find something to be happy about every day!

As a business woman, I was pretty devastated to cancel over 30 private coaching sessions when the shutdown occurred! Luckily, once



A thank you medal from a client (photo: K. Brackin)

Sarah Ellison

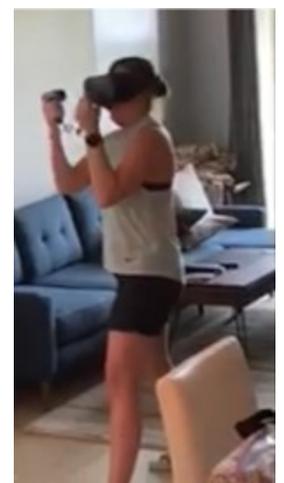
New In Town

Hello everyone! I recently relocated to St Pete (along with my husband and fur baby) after having spent the last 16 years in downtown Chicago and our whole lives in the Midwest. Moving during the pandemic was nerve racking and not without its challenges but we are thrilled to be in St Pete. We've been keeping busy exploring parks, beaches, playing games on our new virtual reality headset and ordering far too many items off of Amazon as we settle into our new home. As a lifelong swimmer, the break from when our fitness center closed in Chicago until the North Shore Aquatic Complex reopened was the longest I have been out of the water in as long as I can remember. I'm thrilled to be back in the pool and try not to rub it in too much with friends up north that still have no option to swim.

I'm an afternoon swimmer (usually in a pink hat and pink shirt) - if you see me say hi! Looking forward to meeting everyone!



1st day back at NSAC (photo: S. Ellison)



Virtual reality boxing (photo: S. Ellison)



Group photo — Coaches in grey, swimmers in blue (photo: M. Zabel)

Mike Zabel

Olympic Training Center

2020, so the Olympics have been moved to 2021 and we are emerging from re-entering? quarantine. Back in October 2019 we were still able to easily travel so I went to Colorado Springs to train at the Olympic Training Center.

I applied for the USA Swimming Adult Performance Camp; which is sponsored by the USA Swimming Foundation; the philanthropic arm of USA Swimming. It can be found at <https://www.usaswimmingfoundation.org>. According to the site, "Participants at the USA Swimming Foundation's Adult Performance Camp will spend a weekend on the campus of the iconic U.S. Olympic Training Center, where they'll have the opportunity to live, eat and train like a National Team Athlete. While on campus, participants will train in the world-

-renowned Olympic Training Complex Aquatic Center—a state-of-the-art facility containing a 50m by 25m pool that is equipped with every conceivable training aid. The Aquatic Center is arguably the finest training facility in the world, and has been the training site for nearly every U.S. Olympic swimmer. Performance camps are led by top coaches in the world, and feature special guests and Olympic gold medalists."

The Registration for the 2019 Adult Performance Camp is \$2,500 per camper. A part of your registration fee is a tax deductible donation to the USA Swimming Foundation. This includes all camp activities including meals, excursions, and ground transportation to and from the Colorado Springs Airport. This does not include airfare or spending money for the gift shop etc.



Missy and Mike going over stroke (photo: M. Zabel)

Coaches & Special Guests:

The camp is staffed by current and former Olympians. For our camp the coaches were Missy Franklin, Maya DiRado, Rowdy Gaines, Ryan Murphy and the Former USA Swimming National Director/Past USA Olympic Swimming Coach Frank Busch. Our Camp managers were Nicole Wilson and Jill Johnson.

Itinerary:

Throughout the three days we were accompanied by the coaches and enjoyed their company. On the drive to the hiking spot, Missy was in charge of the radio and she was trying to get us all to a tattoo shop for tattoos. We were really in

a team type of environment, giving and taking between all of us.



Ryan Murphy pre liftoff, showing how to get out of the pool (photo: M. Zabel)

Swimming:

The workouts were sectioned into three groups in the pool. The top tier were fast. Typical was one swimmer who was swimming at the TYR Pro series. The second group I was in, this is more of a Sharks workout with the third which was a stroke level of effort. At every swim, the coaches are in the water with you, so it's a little unnerving to have Rowdy underneath you watching your stroke, or doing 50s with Missy next to you in your lane and offering you suggestions on your stroke during the rests. You also get a lot of time one-on-one with each of the coaches. All with Frank Busch running you through the workout. Unfortunately, the altitude does play a major factor, so don't expect to have the same recovery or ability in the pool. With four 90 minute sessions there is a whole lot of swimming Long Course in the OTC Pool. Be prepared to swim!



New friends Maya DiRado, Missy Franklin, and Ryan Murphy—Total Olympic Medal haul: 10 gold, 1 silver, 2 bronze (photo: M. Zabel)



Can't get out of dryland with Rowdy (photo: M. Zabel)

I had an amazing experience, even staying in the dorms. I will definitely go back in the future, but the next camp is in 2022 due to the Olympics in 2021.

Ananda Bergeron

Quaranteenagers

Maintaining sanity with two teenaged male roommates during a global pandemic has proven to be a challenging but interesting feat. Unlike many boys of their age, both of my boys have been more active in the performing arts - musical theatre, ballet, jazz band - than in sports. For them, the blow of having school closed in the spring went beyond no longer getting to see friends and figuring out online school and also included cancellations of year-end shows they'd invested hours and hours of rehearsal time into. After struggling through the first four phases of the grief cycle, they finally accepted their fates of not getting to share their hard-earned performances.



We typically use the summertime for big vacations and had all sorts of ambitious plans this year including trips to San Francisco and Minnesota. Those unfortunately had to fall by the wayside. We have been enjoying life at home and feel lucky to be in beautiful St. Pete. It's been so nice to see neighbors walking outside and for the boys to actually enjoy getting outdoors because they're stuck at home so much. It was tougher while the beaches were closed. We ventured downtown for an evening walk along the bay one day but found that everybody else unfortunately had the same idea. Now that the beaches (and even the pier!) are open, there's more outdoor space for everybody to share safely.

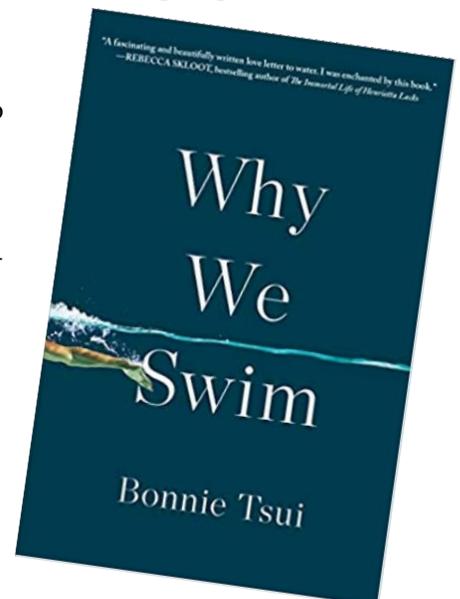
The boys have taken up different activities outside to keep themselves occupied and active. Haydn, the earnest 16 year old, has proudly taken up cycling the Pinellas Trail a couple times a week and is looking forward to his high school swim season starting back up in a couple of weeks. Graham, the goofy, outspoken 13 year old has been enjoying summer swim camp with SPA as well as surfing some gulf waves, remnants of the latest tropical storm.

We managed to go on one small camping trip to the Chassahowitzka River over the July 4th weekend, which will serve as our 2020 summer vacation. It was not quite the Hawai'i of last summer or the Europe of 2018, but it was just right for the summer of COVID. We took the boat out to the Chassahowitzka Bay and went scalloping on Friday followed by a fun-filled day of kayaking to some of the different springs on the river on Saturday. Despite a few bugs and a few too many people, we managed to keep our distance and have a great time.

One of the most special things to me about this summer is the friendship that has grown between the boys. Although they got along great when they were small, they have not been the best of buds the past few years. It wasn't abnormal for them to completely avoid each other. Now, maybe from being stuck together and maybe a bit from maturing, they are interacting and getting along much better than they had been. It's been a welcome change that I hope lasts well after the pandemic is over.

Mitchel Hoffman

What a timely release of a book that captures so much of our feeling about our sport! Mitchel Hoffman strongly recommends this read ... "I devoured and loved a 200 page book. I derive a tremendous sense of freedom, relaxation and well-being from swimming." He's not the only one. Here is a [review](#) published in the New York Times, back in April.





Charlotte Petersen

This is what a day in a life of an cardiovascular intensive care nurse looks like. Please wear your mask when out in public. Swimming at NSAC is a gift, and we must treat it as such!



Sheila pre-op (photo: J. Van Dijk)

Get Well Soon!

A few of our team members took the time to have some elective surgeries done. Cheryl Kupan had surgery on her finger, Ron Collins on his knee, and Tabitha Brandt on her hip. Sheila Carpenter-Van Dijk had a hip replacement on on June 26 and then knee surgery on August . She writes, "I will be a machine. I will be setting off metal detectors with three titanium joints (got my left hip 7 years ago). I'm really looking forward to *no pain* but I've got a ways to go. Getting this hip was outpatient surgery. Amazing. There were some special x-rays done, then a CT scan of my leg. My hip was 3D printed and made for me so there was no 'fitting.' As an engineer, I find all this fascinating."

Wishing everyone swift recoveries!

Thoughts From A Lane, Far, Far Away

Gary Bastie



I had a few thoughts regarding our current situation with lane assignments, general health, and a few other ideas that have settled into my daily routine. See if you agree.

First, I've seen a number of swimmers who've become fixtures. By that I mean, they're now regulars when they used to be occasional swimmers. That of course, is one of the positive results of our being assigned limited time in a reserved lane. But, it's been working and helping a number of us (including myself) be more on schedule.

Second, we've discovered why we like to swim. It feels great in the water, and we actually get antsy just before it's our time to enter the pool. We look forward to our lane assignments, hope we get to swim near our friends, and we really like those first few

strokes in the refreshing water. After we're finished, we have that endorphin rush that lasts at least until we get out of the parking lot. So, chalk up another one for our current situation.

Third, by swimming more often and regularly in most cases, we're staying in better health. From the professionals I've spoken with, that bodes well for the body fighting off foreign stuff like viruses. While I don't know of any swimmers who've come down with this new virus with a new name, perhaps that's because swimmers are healthier.

Fourth, water with chlorine, sun, and heat seem to defeat many viruses. So, our training environment is tailor made for maintaining good health. That alone is a reason to keep hopping in each morning.

And fifth, we've been forced to evaluate our priorities in life. While most of us would avoid doing that unless a gun were held to our heads, our current state of affairs has sort of forced us to evaluate our time, workouts, and get us refocused on some of the things we like to do, need to do, or never realized were important to us.

So, on the positive side of things, the current pool program has had a positive impact on those of us who are looking for, you guessed it, more positive things. Oh, we could cry about not seeing all of our friends or having group workouts but, at least we're still working out, in a great facility, and it's a healthy environment to boot. So, the next time you get feeling sorry for yourself, pull out this article and be reminded about just how good we have it. For us, even when things aren't great, they're still really good.

Coach Gary's Tips—10 Suggestions for Working Out By Yourself



1. Enjoy the solitude and doing whatever you want to. Most of the time, life is structured for us but, with the ability to do whatever we want, there's freedom to experiment.

2. Experiment. If you ever wanted to do a set a certain way, now's the time. If you've ever wanted to do a certain set, do it. And, if you've ever wanted to try something new, try it and see what happens. There's literally nothing (or anyone) stopping you.

3. Think about your strengths and weaknesses and take some workout time to focus on three things you're good at and three you're weak at. Mix them up in a workout and learn to enjoy working on things or being good at things. You win either way.

4. Try some sets with restricted breathing. When I was in college, one of the things we'd do is swim 400's. I got to where I could 4-stroke breathe the entire 400. Best of all, that helped me be more efficient and my times would drop over a set. While breathing every other stroke was faster, I felt very efficient when I breathed every 4 strokes. Just a thought and I'll be you can think of a few variations of that.

5. Pyramids. A pyramid is a set where you go up and down in distances. For instance, 100, 200, 300, 400, 300, 200, 100. What happens is that you swim a bit faster on the way down than you did on the way up to say, 400.

6. Descending sets. If you like a challenge, try something like this: Swim 3 x 200 on whatever. Descend 1 -3 with #3 being the fastest. Then, do the same for 150's, 100's, 75's, 50's, and 25's.

7. 50/50 sets. If you want to challenge your 100's, 200's, or whatever, then swim 50 stroke, 50 free for the set. If you're really energetic, you can split the distance where the first half is stroke and the second half is free. You should pick up the free, just like coming home on an IM.

8. Test Sets. Each week, do the same set and see if you improve. For instance, you could swim 10 x 50 on 1:30 or even 2:00. The goal is to swim as fast as possible for all 10, not just for the first couple. By the time you do such a set for several weeks, your 50 times will definitely improve.

9. Upper/Lower. If you want to make swimming like a weight training workout, then try concentrating on upper body one day and lower body the next. In swimming terms, that's pulling vs. kicking. One day you might pull more while the next would be kicking sets you normally swim.

10. Depending on the day, you might think about swimming "up" to the next level of workout or "down". If you go up, you may need to wear fins. If you go down, you might do more sprints because you're getting more rest.

11. Bonus. How about wearing fins for a set that you normally never wear fins for? It could be some 25/s 50's or even 100's. Then, add hand paddles and see how swimming really fast feels. You might be able to get away with it once a week but I guarantee you'll feel great after swimming a lot faster than usual.



Regina Novak is the Wellness Specialist for the City of Clearwater

Where Are We Now

By Regina Novak

Since mid-March, when all of this started, my kids have been asking the same question:

“Mommy, when will COVID be over?”

Being the voice of hope and reason, it was a constant reassurance that all of this is temporary, and we will be back to normal soon. We spent a lot of time focusing on the silver lining, like being grateful for what we have, enjoying additional time together, not rushing around so much.

We made the most of it, and as things slowly started opening again, we rejoiced at returning to a sliver of normal life. The day the pool re-

opened added a burst of light into our life, and we continue to be incredibly grateful to be back here at Northshore. Though we are not altogether as a team, the mere ability to see each other and even get lucky enough to work out with a few teammates is cause for celebration.

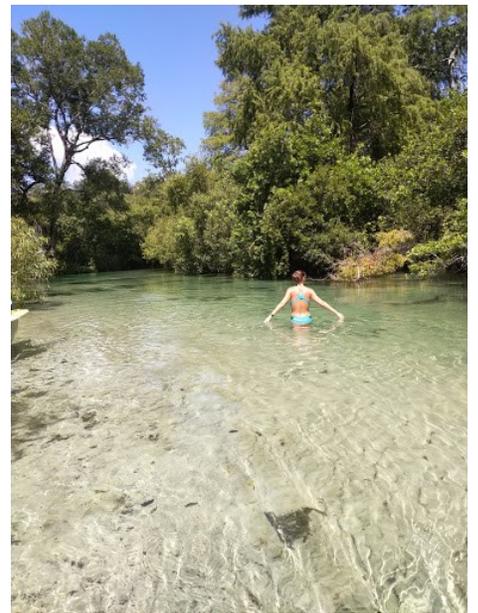
Here we are, mid-July as I write this. Life is not normal. In fact, there is no end in sight. About two weeks ago it hit me hard that I have no idea when this will end. Normal life, normal schedules, life before COVID-19....I have no idea when that will come back. Honestly, I don't think anyone has that answer.

I admit that that realization hit me hard. I have studied and taken courses on resilience and thriving. I have spoken on these topics at conferences and employer symposiums. I don't like the status quo, and like many of you, I want more. I don't want to just get by; I want to thrive! Is thriving possible right now, in this environment, or in 2020, must I just accept that getting by is as good as it gets?

Thriving is possible. How we define thriving may need to be tweaked, but it is within reach. Maybe winning this year won't be done during a meet or open water event. Many competitions have been cancelled, and what opportunities will arise this year are yet to be seen. What if instead you focused on what successful swimming would look like in your 50 minute reservation? Maybe 2,000 yards felt tough when first getting back to swimming. Where are you now? Can you do 2,500 yards now with no problem? Regardless of what your 100 or 200 time was back in May, where is it now? Are you feeling stronger? Are you taking this time to correct or tweak things that will help your stroke and drop time down the road? Is this shortened time allowing you to swim better than before because you are more rested and not as overworked?

Out of the pool, I've heard many people say they are surprised at how much money they have saved. In a time when things are looking somewhat dismal on the economic front, many people have reported that their monthly budget has dropped as they spend less money on things like restaurant, vacations and child care expenses. Those dollars instead have gone to paying down debt or saving money, both really good things when it comes to winning financially. I would say that is thriving right there!

It's okay to want normal life back. We cannot control when that happens. What we CAN control is what we do in the meantime. Let's release “normal life” expectations and instead create a new definition of what it means to thrive right now and work towards that. Let's cultivate a new way to thrive for ourselves and for each other, and reach a level of contentment and achievement for what we do right even when life throws us curveballs.



Catching a little break at Weeki Wachee (photo: R. Novak)

Love is in the Air ... and in the Water



A champagne toast! (photo: T. Kirkman)

After three and a half years of dating, miles and miles of open water marathon competitions partnering, Tori Kirkman and Donnie Sigley will be partners in life! Donnie had originally planned to pop the question during their 4th of July camping trip at Jay B. Starkey Wilderness Park, but he was too excited once he got the ring, he proposed the same evening just before dinner. Tori explains, “He’d made an excuse to run out that afternoon, and it turns out it was to pick up the ring he’d ordered. I had just fixed my plate of fajitas, and he walked in and just got on one knee and asked me to marry him right in the kitchen ... I was so shocked and excited that I couldn’t eat, but I fixed some several hours later and they were the best fajitas ever!”

Donnie’s mom, sister, grandparents, and Tori’s mom were all privy to his plan, but of course, Tori was the last to find out, and naturally eager to share the news. “We were quite excited, and it was so special to celebrate with our families! As most people know, I’m really close to my mom, and his family as well. My mom even had some champagne sitting around since she and Jeff love mimosas.” They haven’t set a date in stone yet, “but we’re thinking maybe September 2021. Hopefully COVID will be a thing of the past by then.”



At Jay B. Starkey Wilderness Park (photo: T. Kirkman)

They met through a mutual friend—one of Tori’s best guy friends from preschool became one of Donnie’s good friends in high school. While their circles overlapped for years, it wasn’t until Tori moved back to Florida in 2017 and crashed the guys’ camping trip and things “really clicked”. She says, “He called me and asked me on a date soon after that trip and the rest is history!”

Tori started open water swimming with her triathlete friends when she was in Colorado, signing up for some alpine lake swims. She explains that the longest of those was 3 miles, but when one of her friends told her about the Swim Around Key West, “I just felt like I had to train and sign up! My first marathon swim was SAKW in 2017 and I loved it. Donnie was by my side for that and the other few long races I’ve done since.” She



Camping celebrations (photo: T. Kirkman)

says that Donnie has always loved kayaking and canoeing, “but I don’t think he particularly loves slowly kayaking around in open water in the blazing sun. But he loves me, and I so appreciate having him by my side!”

Congratulations to Tori and Donnie — Wishing you happiness together as you paddle and swim side by side in the water and through life!

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