



RRM SPLASH

Happy January Birthdays!

- 7th Mike Whitler
- 10th Stephen Carter
- 11th Martha Siskron
- 15th Linzie Hebert
- 23rd David Akers
- 24th Joy Heard
- 31st Peter Ramsey

Welcome New Swimmers

- David Akers
- Maryanne Cummings
- Jon Martin

January, 2007

Volume 1, Issue 1

Swim Clinic February 2-4

We are very pleased and honored to have Ed Nessel visiting us February 2-4 for a swim clinic. Ed has nearly 40 years of coaching experience and has forgotten more than most people have ever learned about swimming. Ed has coached at many levels from learn-to-swim to world class athletes. One of his protégés, Cullen Jones, is currently a top-ranked sprinter globally. He also coached Ron Karnough and others to Olympic heights and national distinction.

Ed has also coached many adult athletes to masters accolades and is himself a many time all-American in masters swimming.

Ed's area of greatest interest is physiology and bio-chemistry—exactly how to get the body to work most efficiently on many levels to get the best results from the efforts invested in swimming. Besides the depth and breadth of his knowledge qualifying him to be the USMS national librarian, he is also a prolific writer. His upcoming book, to be published later this year, will focus on swimming technique and analyzing problems to

scientifically approach a more efficient way to move through the water.

Ed will address a number of topics during his visit to Shreveport including "The Science of Swimming" which will look at this question of efficiency. As well, he will discuss the physiology of aging and how the body changes over time in regards to athletic abilities. We will also be regaled with a lunchtime discussion about "Eating to Win."



Register now to ensure your spot at the clinic!

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Bank Draft Now Available

Red River Masters is pleased to accept bank drafts for payment now. By agreeing to a bank draft and a 6-month commitment, monthly dues are \$35 rather than the month-to-month \$40.

To sign up for bank drafts, go to the web page and click

on the link on the home page, the fees page, or the links page. Complete the form with the basic information. You can include all of the account information or attach a voided check. Bring your completed form to the pool and we will enroll you.

Once you are signed up for the bank draft, dues will be debited from your account about the 3rd business day of the month. We intend to send out an email at the end of each month reminding everyone of the upcoming dues debits.



Schedule Changes this month:

No swimming the following evenings:

Thursday, January 18th

Monday January 22

Due to home basketball games

We want to keep growing swimming in the Arklatex— 3 clinics and some competitions for masters this year!

Beeper Service

We have a lot of folks that swim with us and spend a lot of time protecting others in the medical field, public service, and raising families. If there is a time that you need us to monitor your cell phone or beeper and let you know when it is activated, let us know. We have done this many times for people. Do not let that issue get in the way of whether or not you should come to your swim workout!

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Coaching Changes

We are very pleased to have three new coaches join us this year and very sad that Devin Rourke is unable to lead workouts any longer due to his academic demands. As we continue to grow our program and add workout times, we are blessed to have the talents of Leah Ramoz, Jenna Turner, and Annie Reese on deck. We are also pleased that Howard Hart was able to join us in the fall and will continue with us this year.

As pointed out in the online bios, all our coaches have been

around the water for a long time—perhaps this explains certain personality quirks!

With the growth in our membership over the last year, we have been able to identify a number of people who are interested in becoming coaches to help lead our programs. It is important to us to have reliability, knowledge, and the ability to deliver a great workout for people.

USMS has identified coaching resources as one of the key limiting factors in the growth of programs and we feel blessed



Teaching is an important component of our coaching!

to have access to so many willing and able leaders.

If you know of anyone who is interested in learning more about becoming a coach, please let us know.

NOONERS! But wait, there's more...

Noon workouts will begin at LSUS on Wednesday, January 17. We are very excited that we have a core group of interested swimmers along with the coaching resources to make the 12:00-1:00 swims possible.

The schedule will be Monday and Wednesday with the strong possibility of adding Friday if demand is sufficient.

Just like you can get a bamboo steamer with your ginsu knives, we've got more coming up...

On **April 14**, we will likely have a one-day **clinic** featuring **Dick Bower** and his thoughts on the ergonomics and physics of swimming.

On **May 5**, the **Senior Olympics** will be at **Centenary** for

ages 40+. We also plan to have a 1,650 swim at this meet that we expect to open to all masters swimmers.

On **June 23**, **Marcia Cleveland** will join us for an **Open Water Clinic**. We are looking into staging an **open water race** sometime in **September** (isn't this when the alligators are hungriest?)

Be Sure to Check out our Website!

We have recently updated and upgraded our website. A quick perusal will reveal a wealth of information for the swimmer new to our program as well as veterans.

The home page will have regular updates for changes in schedules and other important news. The "About" page has information about our program along with particular policies we have for unusual events. All

of our coaches are profiled with an email link directly to them.

If you are looking to schedule your regular workouts or plan ahead for big events and competitions, check out the "Schedule" and "Events" pages.

We have links to some usual suspects along with downloadable forms to make paperwork easy for everyone.

If you are looking for some



Check us out at <http://www.redrivermasters.com>

equipment, we have arranged discounts with 2 vendors: check out the "Gear" page.

Going the Distance with USMS

The USMS Fitness committee has announced a new challenge called “Go the Distance.”

The objective of this event is for participants to track the distance swum during 2007. When participants achieve specific distance milestones of 50 miles, 100 miles, 250 miles, 500 miles, 750 miles and 1000 miles – they will be recognized on the USMS website.

There is no cost to enter this event. Participants are requested to email (or use snail mail) to submit the total distance they swim each month.

A list of miles per month and cumulative mileage will be tabulated for each swimmer.

Once a distance milestone is achieved awards will be available for purchase. They will include swim caps, certificates, patches and t-shirts with the event logo and the distance of the milestone achieved.

This event was designed to encourage folks to track the distance they swim in order to review their progress and to be recognized for their achievements. There is no time limit for the distance mile-

stones (except that it must be in 2007) so speed does not count – just the effort to attain the next goal.

For right now, all you need to do is track the distance you swim at each workout—you will be surprised how quickly it adds up!

If you are interested in participating in this event, please let us know. You can get more information from Mary Sweat at gothedis-tance@swimoregon.org



One Hour Postal & Annual 5-Part Championship

In January, we will once again have the opportunity to complete the one hour postal swim. This is simply the longest distance you can swim in an hour. We have participated in this event most of the last several years as both a personal test and a good measure of what a good pace is to maintain in regular workouts. **Please let us know if you are inter-**

ested in swimming this as well as timing for one of your team mates.

Less known is the fact that the one hour swim is the kick-off to an annually recognized select group that completes all 5 of the long distance postal championships. The distances and dates of completion for each of these pool swims are as follows:

- One Hour swim in January
- 5k swim from 5/15-9/15
- 10k swim from 5/15-9/15
- 3k swim from 9/15-11/15
- 6k swim from 9/15-11/15

If you are interested in pursuing this elusive title, please let us know and we can help with arranging the logistics!

Going Postal was

never so wet!



USMS Nationals in Houston and Austin

This August 10-13, USMS long course nationals will be at the Woodlands. For anyone interested in competitive swimming, this is a great opportunity a short drive away to go head to head with people of your own age group. This meet will be held in a 50-meter pool and usually attracts swimmers with a wide range of ability levels—from record setters to folks swimming in their first big meet.

If that wasn't enough, in the spring of 2008, USMS short course nationals will be at the University of Texas in Austin. Long recognized as one of the best facilities in the world, this promises to be a great meet. This meet will be swum in the 25-yard pool and is again expected to draw swimmers from all over the country. Again, with this a drivable distance, it should be a great opportunity for us.

To help prepare those who are interested in this sort of endeavor, we will be adding more test sets and race-like situations into our workouts. We will also focus on multiple strokes, starts and turns at appropriate times along with putting on some local competitions. IF you are not interested, that's ok and we will not pressure anyone to attend the competitions.



Breathe Deep!

Swimming can be difficult because it is an even more technical than walking! And you say—what is so technical about walking? Have you ever seen someone injured re-learning to walk? When a child is learning to walk, a load of falling down occurs. Walking demands balance, body position, and managing moving weight. Each step can really be seen as a carefully measured and controlled fall.

Thankfully, there is not much falling that goes on with swimming. However, like walking, swimming is a full-body activity that requires a lot of coordination. One thing that distinguishes swimming besides the horizontal body position and water medium is breathing is largely restricted by the very water through which we swim.

Breathing while swimming is very much an acquired skill. Since we do not have gills, we cannot extract oxygen from the water. Therefore, since oxygen is needed for cellular metabolism by most people and it is desirable to eliminate carbon dioxide to maintain blood pH, positioning the mouth out of the water to breathe is important. Most people find it efficient to move the head to breathe. We will focus here on breathing in freestyle since that is an action that causes problems for many swimmers.

Learning to breathe effectively is one of the most significant challenges we see with adults as they learn to swim and try to improve. After about age 12, recognition of mortality creeps into the consciousness and water is seen as a dangerous foe. In a swim more than about 25 meters, there is a fear monkey that dances on the shoulders whispering, shouting, and screaming into the ears about the fact that something dangerous is going on. It is

really important to park that fear monkey on the deck and get to business.

The fear monkey often creates a “shark attack victim” stroke where the swimmer thrashes around as if caught in the maw of a marine beast. However, what is really going on is the arms and legs are being used to help jerk the head out of the water to position the mouth to take a breath. Not efficient. The head should never be lifted clear of the water—try lifting a 5-pound diving block out of the water. This forces the body to compensate and throws off the stroke mechanics. What is to be done?

First, **head position** needs to be regulated. When not turning to breathe, the head should be in the “neutral” position—just like you are standing looking straight ahead. In the water, the eyes should be looking straight at the bottom and the waterline right where the hairline is (or at least where it used to be). Many people were taught to swim looking in the direction of travel. This forces the hips lower in the water, creating extra drag and adding complexity to breathing. Some people bury their head which leads to extra drag as the head and often the shoulders are submerged. This position increases the difficulty of efficiently turning the head to breathe.

When **turning the head to breathe**, look to the side with the face slightly back. A lot of folks look forward when they breathe, especially open water swimmers. This increases the difficulty in a number of ways:

1. it increases the number of small muscles used in the neck
2. it points the face to waves
3. the head turns further to get the mouth free of the water

One drill that helps is the “Stinky Pete Armpit Breathing Drill” where a conscious effort is made to look back toward the armpit during the breath. This helps a couple of ways:

1. it's the most relaxed position
2. it takes advantage of any bow wave you create
3. it protects the face from waves

When the head position and turning action are stabilized, the next step is ensuring the **mouth shape** is optimal. If you are in a choir and open your mouth all the way, this likely will not transfer exceptionally well to the pool. A wide open mouth welcomes the water into it. Instead, keep the lower portion of the mouth partially closed and breathing more through the more widely opened upper portion of your mouth while you have your head turned.

Exhaling is critical in breathing. The panicked feeling when you are in oxygen debt is largely driven by a lowering of the blood pH by a build up of CO₂—get rid of that CO₂ and you will feel better. A lot of folks wait to exhale until the head is turned to breathe. Don't. This expends valuable time with the head in a suboptimal position. Exhale by blowing bubbles before and while your head turns. Use the mouth=air time to inhale!

Breathing patterns often favor one side—always breathing to the left or right. This is fine unless a hitch is created in the stroke. This often occurs when the hand opposite the breathing side moves toward and outward to help lift the head up to breathe. This is suboptimal for a number of reasons:

1. the body is pushed laterally
2. the hand is in a weak position and poorly positioned for the power phase of the stroke
3. it can lead to shoulder pain

Once the body gets off course, compensation is made to get it back on course through the use of the other arm or erratic movements with the legs. One way to remedy this is to breathe bilaterally. This means breathing each 3 strokes or each 3 strokes and then each 2 strokes, repeating patterns of 3-2. This helps minimize oxygen debt while keeping the stroke balanced. Anything more than 6 arm strokes per 2 breaths is considered hypoxic, leading quickly to the feeling of being out of breath and fostering a panicked need for getting air.

Although it seems elementary, breathing is an essential part of swimming at all levels. It is something you have to think about, plan for, and execute efficiently. Comfort in the water is often dictated by the ease at which you can breathe.

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Is an irregular publication from an irregular bunch.

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Anything that doesn't kill you makes you stronger...