

Ancient Mariners

Masters Swimming

INSIDE

<i>From The Editor</i>	1
<i>A View From the Deck</i>	1
<i>Ancient Mariners Drowned</i>	1
<i>Book Review</i>	1
<i>KUDOS</i>	2
<i>Mariner in the Marine Marathon</i> ..	2
<i>Rise To The Occasion</i>	2
<i>Love Is In The Air</i>	3
<i>No Brain, No Pain</i>	3
<i>Mariner becomes IRONMAN</i> ...	4
<i>Albatross Open</i>	4

From The Editor

It's amazing how this addition of the newsletter developed a theme of it's own. It started with Olney coach, Stan Tinkham, who emphasizes in his *View from the Deck* (p.1) the importance of maintaining constant motion while swimming, which ties into MAC Mariner-Larry Curran's article (p.3) on the efficiency of streamlining. Both Tinkham & Curran remind us that we cannot improve without positive, motivational thinking which leads us to CJ Lockman's article (p.2) challenging us to push our limits. Speaking of pushing our limits, check out articles featuring fellow Mariners, John Marquardt (p.2) and Brian Davis (p.4). Hope you're inspired!

Montgomery

Ancient Mariners

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A View From the Deck

by Stan Tinkham

Newton was the greatest swimming coach of all time - momentum, friction, gravity, inertia, laws of motion, viscosity, velocity---WOW!! Add kinesiology and water to all of the above and what do you get? Hopefully you answered swimmers.

You can't pinch everyone's nose and make all noses look alike, nor can you put all swimmers in a mold, jump on the mold, and expect swimmers to swim alike.

Suppose you were driving your car and stopped every time you took a breath. You would use a great deal of gasoline (energy) stopping and starting. You would lose your inertia and momentum at each breath cycle. And yet, when we swim we do just that. Constant motion or velocity is perhaps the most important "law" of motion that we should maintain while swimming. It is also difficult to perfect. I have never seen a swimmer who does not have some inhibiting motion while breathing (with the possible exception of backstroke).

The old adage *a straight line is the shortest distance between two points* rings especially true for swimmers. When two swimmers swim at the same velocity and one's belly button follows in a line behind his nose and the other swimmer's belly button does not maintain a straight path in line with the nose, the second swimmer will swim farther and thereby lose the race.

In order to go one way, you have to push in the opposite direction. Any motion up or down or sideways is wasted. The hands should always be facing backwards. The fastest swimmers will usually take fewer, more efficient strokes than their slower counterparts. The stronger your cardio-vascular system, the less oxygen debt you will experience. The higher the body rides in the water, the faster you will swim.

Enough glittering generalizations. Add to these ideas short torsos, long legs, short arms, skinny/fat bodies, flexibility, "fear of flying" (off the starting blocks), and how do you get all swimmers to

follow the laws of motion? It's all in the state of mind!

"Life's battles don't always go the stronger or faster man (person). But sooner or later the man (person) who wins is the fellow who thinks he can."

Stan Tinkham is our coach at Olney Indoor Swim Cetner. Catch his live act on Tuesday and Thursday nights or Saturday mornings at 7:30AM.

Ancient Mariners Drowned in Fun Meet

by Tom Denes

The Montgomery Ancient Mariners suffered their first Fun Meet loss ever to arch rivals, Fairfax County Masters. The meet, held on November 4, 1995, at the Holton Arms School, saw the highly spirited Fairfax County Masters roll up 167 points compared to 104 for the Ancient Mariners and 38 for DCRP. Ancient Mariners winning events were CJ Lockman, Margot Pettijohn, Jill Roddin, Clay Britt, Jason Crist, and Jeff Roddin. Others scoring points were Barbara Clifford, Natalie Ferrell, Torie Keller, Carole Kammel, Cathy Pogharian, Jodi Ramsbottom, Diana Schwartz, Mike Bartlett, Tom Denes, Warren Friedland, Dave Harmon, Mickey Hall, Nick Olmos-Lau, and Aman Pogharian. Following the meet, the participants crushed into Mickey Hall's house for a high energy party. The theme for next year's meet: *The Revenge of the Ancient Mariners!*

Book Review

by Natalie Ferrell

THE COMPLETE GUIDE TO SWIMMING
BY PHIL WHITTEN

I highly recommend *The Complete Guide to Swimming* authored by Phil Whitten, current editor of *SWIM* magazine. It is a useful reference for a swimmer of any level. Whitten offers numerous tips on technique with detailed diagrams of strokes, turns and starts as well as a number of different workouts with intervals for all levels. Check it out at the Rockville Library before you buy it for yourself or give it as a gift - for \$16.95 it's a steal.

KUDOS

by Tom Denes

- We inadvertently left Michelle Chestnut out of our listing of Ancient Mariners completing the 4.4 mile Chesapeake Bay swim. Congratulations to Michelle for completing her first crossing!
- Clay Britt swam the fastest USMS 100 yard backstroke in the nation this past year. Clay's sizzling 50.51 was not only the fastest in his age group (30-34), but also the fastest amongst all age groups! Congratulations, Clay!
- Congratulations to Ron Bardach for completing the JFK 50 Mile Trail marathon in 8 hours and 50 minutes, placing 78th out of 650 starters! Despite throwing up several times following the race, Ron pronounced the event as "fun."
- Moira Williams and Vince Steison "tied the knot" on October 20, 1995. Tracey Crilly and Joe Diss exchanged vows on October 21, 1995. Congrats to both sets of newlyweds!
- Baby News: Warren and Wendy Friedland had a baby boy (Carl) on December 23, 1995. Pat Bowditch and Austin St. John had a baby girl (Mary) on December 29, 1995. Congratulations!
- Several Ancient Mariners appeared in the recently released long course meters top ten rankings. Appearing were Margot Pettijohn in four events and Jeff Roddin in seven events. Margot's best showing was 3rd in the 200 breast; Jeff's best showing was 1st in the 200 I.M.
- Goodbye and good luck to Mike Wheeler who returned with his wife, Kyle, to New Mexico. Mike and Kyle may be contacted at 2987 Woodland Road, Los Alamos, New Mexico 87544.

Mariner in the Marine Corps Marathon

by John L. Marquardt

Fifteen thousand runners assembled on a chilly fall morning in October for the 20th annual running of the Marine Corps Marathon. As a representative of the Montgomery Ancient Mariners, I was there to run the race and report the results.

I have to admit that I got off to kind of a crappy start. In fact, when the gun went off I was still in the porta pot. You will sympathize, because I had to go and had no intention of waiting until I got back.

So, 6 1/2 minutes after the race officially started, I was off! Yes, all 15,000 runners were already gone, except for the few poor souls behind me in the porta pot line.

I did very well in the race, passing nearly 11,000 people in the 26 miles. Yes, it helps to have a lot of people in the race, but I have to admit that I'm no Brian Davis-"I run marathons for breakfast"-kind of guy.

The marathon this year was basically uneventful: lots of running, people cheering you on and basically just a lot of fun. I can't stress how much fun it is, and anybody with the stamina and physical abilities to swim with the mariners can certainly prepare for and run the marathon.

I do have an amusing story from last years marathon. It's about my brush with my celebrity competitor, Oprah Winfrey. Running along with my friend Andy Wang, I came along a woman in mile two. While I was right next to her, Andy pointed and exclaimed, "Look, its Oprah!" Not recognizing her and expecting her to be much heavier, I yelled back "No its not!" Yes, I'm sure she heard me. Luckily neither she nor her body guards did anything about it.

Editor's Note: *John failed to mention that the day before the marathon he took the GMAT for which he spent months doing a "marathon" of studying, and since that wasn't enough of a challenge he then began studying for the LSAT which he took in November. Did he Rise to the Occasion?? Read on.*

Rise To The Occasion

by CJ Lockman, MA

Have you ever seen those boards along the roadside - the ones with the removable letters announcing events, special occasions, messages? Recently I saw one that said "You cannot do the external without the internal." When I got home to write down this interesting thought, I could not remember if it said "external .. internal " or "internal..external"! I realized that both statements are true.

"You cannot do the **external** without the **internal**." How can you put forth your best effort if you talk negatively to yourself? Or if you are not prepared? Or if you do not believe in yourself? The simple concepts of positive self-talk, visualization, and belief in yourself can do wonders for your performance!

" You cannot do the **internal** without the **external**." This reminds me of pushing our limits. Sometimes you need to DO! on the outside before you can open new doors of belief. Going to places at new times, trying a new activity, accepting an invitation even if you are a little hesitant - you never know who you might meet, what you might see, what you might experience. Try the faster interval in practice, do all of the fly in the set, move over to that next faster lane. You'll be surprised at how quickly you adapt to the new challenges!

So next time you find yourself in that same old routine, decide if it's internal or external, and then rise to the occasion!

Ancient Mariner CJ Lockman owns Positive Performance, a sport psychology consulting company in Bethesda, MD.

Love Is In The Air (or is it the Water)

by Natalie Ferrell

Watch out singles, something may be in the water. We have three new engagements to announce. Our very own coach Clay Brit will wed his lady love, Mary Wingerter, this June. CJ Lockman and Mickey Hall, who by fate began swimming in the same lane last winter, will be wed in early September. Another match made in the pool, Mary Ellen

Mess and Jeff Roddin, will marry in late September.

I recommend that all singles keep their guard up since it's not even spring yet. If you don't, you might find yourself saying "I Do" on a mountain in Colorado. Caroline "Casey" Case and Greg Scace did on January 24, 1996. The receipt they received from the county courthouse in Aspen said "Thank you. *Please call again.*" Hopefully they won't need to.

Congratulations to everyone! Marriage is a commitment worth making!

No Brain, No Pain

by Larry Curran

We have all been taught that the way to swim faster and further is to work harder and train more often. In other words, no pain, no gain. However, every once in a while we entertain the notion that perhaps by improving our stroke technique we could improve our swimming performance. That usually doesn't last long though since we all use the stroke we saw that Olympic swimmer do on TV and besides, it feels funny when we change from our normal (?) stroke. In other words, no brain, no pain.

To develop effective and efficient technique, your workouts should be a constant exercise in self appraisal of what you are doing with continuous questioning why something does or doesn't work. The easiest way to do this is by being extremely attentive to streamlining. Your goal should be to get through the water while disturbing it as little as possible. There should be no wasted or ineffective motion, nor should there be a struggle against the water. Bubbles and waves are generally indications of wasted energy and should be minimized. The water flowing around your body should be smooth and feel balanced on all sides. If the water feels as though it has a texture, or if it presses more in one place than another, you are probably forming bubbles at the point where you feel it. Ask why, figure out what's causing it and find a way to fix it.

The ideal in streamlining is probably a long straight spear as it passes through the water

with very little resistance. While we can never attain this ideal, there are many similarities that we can adapt to our own swimming style. First of all, the spear is perfectly aligned. Unlike our bodies which have joints and therefore flexibility, the spear never sways from side to side nor does it bend and contort itself into shapes that are strongly resisted by the water flowing around it. You can come closest to this ideal during a streamlined push-off from the wall.

Join your hands either by interlocking your thumbs or placing them together with the back of one hand in the palm of the other. The secret here is that the hands must be joined, not just resting next to each other. As you begin your push-off, extend your arms fully in front of you by contracting your triceps until your arms press against your ears with your face towards the bottom of the pool. This will not only reduce the drag around your head, arms and shoulders, but it will allow you to reduce the width of your shoulders and further reduce the drag. When you start your push-off, be sure you are about two feet below the surface. Remember that it takes energy to make waves and any waves you generate represent wasted energy you could have converted to a longer glide from the wall.

As you reach your full extension, be sure your body is fairly rigid and in a perfect alignment to be maintained until you are ready to take your first arm pull. Be exceedingly sensitive to any unbalanced feelings of pressure or motion not in a straight line. Begin your first freestyle arm pull slightly below the surface so that you smoothly transition to swimming on the surface. When done effectively, an observer will see NO WAVES AT ALL until your head breaks the surface and you should be well past the backstroke flags by the time you complete the first freestyle arm pull. **MEMORIZE THIS STREAMLINED GLIDE POSITION, PARTICULARLY HOW IT FEELS ON ALL PARTS OF YOUR BODY.**

Imagine that you are the spear and that you are passing through the water without disturbing it. This will provide a reference point upon which to build an effective stroke. Notice how little effort you need to expend on the first arm pull to maintain your

forward motion. Be alert for any subsequent motion that causes any part of your body to leave this position of perfect alignment.

Most stroke defects have an affect on your ability to maintain a streamlined position. As you start to swim after each push-off, try to keep your feet close together (use a pull-buoy to start with if you want) thereby keeping your lower body aligned. Notice whether your legs are directly behind you or whether one or both have moved to one side. Notice whether your spine is always in a straight line and aligned with the direction you're going. Notice whether your feet are near the surface but not making a large splash. Notice whether your head is held at a constant height relative to the surface as you move through a stroke cycle. Unbalanced forces will upset these check points, a reflection of ineffective streamlining. Raising your head too high will cause your feet to sink. Make your pull too short and your feet will sink. Pull too far to one side and your hips will move out of alignment to compensate for it. Bend your knees excessively on your freestyle kick, on one or both legs, and you will experience significantly increased drag no matter how strong the resulting kick.

Any force exerted on one side of the body must be compensated for by some other motion of the body. Anything that is raised higher in the water (e.g. head) causes something else to sink (e.g. feet). Streamlining is affected by any unbalanced force. Remember, no brain, no pain! Always be conscious of any disturbance you cause to the water.

It is difficult to break habits and do things differently from the way we have always done them. However, if improvement in swimming is what you want, change you must! Always be sensitive to your imitation of the streamlined spear and don't accept any deviation in your streamlining. Make your stroke effective within the context of the perfect streamlined position.

Larry Curran is a member of the Montgomery County Ancient Mariners, a founding member of Reston Masters and a former Navy pilot.

Ancient Mariner becomes IRONMAN

by Natalie Ferrell *with contributions from special reporter Brian Davis on location in Hawaii*

Montgomery County Ancient Mariner team member Brian Davis successfully completed the Gatorade Ironman World Triathlon Championships on October 7th, in Kailua-Kona, Hawaii. He finished 146th out of 1441 entrants overall, and 8th in the 20-24 age group.

Davis had a very strong start. He emerged from the 2.4 mile swim among many of the top professionals, placing 10th overall.

"It was important for me to have a strong swim, because that is my forte. A solid swim gave me some much needed confidence heading out into the lava fields on the bike."

After finishing the swim leg, the real challenge of the Ironman began; the 112 mile bike ride through the heat and the hills of the lava fields. Normally, the lava fields present enough of a challenge for the competitors, but this year 25-40 mph cross-winds greeted the contestants as they made their way up to the bike turnaround at Hawaii.

Unfortunately for Davis, the elements began to take their toll. "It was definitely frustrating seeing all these people go by me on the bike. I kept telling myself not to exert too much energy fighting the elements, because I still had the run."

After a disappointing bike ride, Davis headed back out into the lava fields for the 26.2 mile run, where his conservative race plan paid dividends. He was able to finish the final leg of the race as strongly as he began. During the run, Davis improved his position by 72 places.

Davis remains very optimistic about his chances of improving in the years to come. "This year my goal was just to finish, so I raced very conservatively. I would like to go back in the next couple of years, and actually race."

Although he placed well this year, he must re-qualify if he wishes to compete again. Next year the stakes increase as he moves up to the more competitive 25-29 age group.

There is no doubt we'll see Davis in Hawaii again conquering those lava fields! Anyone have the guts to join him?

Albatross Open - Around the Corner

by Tom Denes

The Montgomery Ancient Mariners will be hosting the fourth annual Albatross Open on March 23 at the Olney Swim Center. If you attended the meeting at Greg & Kathleen's on January 28, you may have already volunteered to help with the meet. If you haven't, there are plenty of fun tasks on which you can still participate. If you don't wish to swim, you may wish to help time at the meet. Don't forget about the social following the meet--it's getting a reputation as the "party of the year!"

Montgomery Ancient Mariners

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WHO IS THAT MASKED MAN?

COMPETITORS IN THE FIRST ANNUAL FIN RACE AT THE FUN MEET-1995.



LOVEBIRDS

Jeff
+
Mary Ellen



CJ
+ Mickey

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