



BlueWave
aquatics

currents

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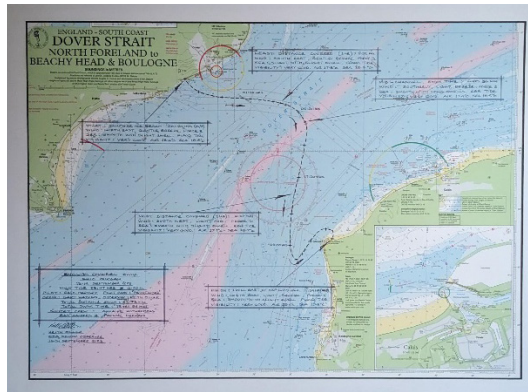


ERIC DURBAN

RECAP OF

English Channel Swim

SEPTEMBER 13-14, 2023



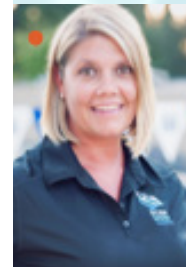
Pre-Swim Efforts

As my brother Lars and I contemplated possible swims in 2023, our focus was on an English Channel attempt. In 2021 and 2022 we had completed the first two legs of the Triple Crown of Marathon Swims (Catalina and Manhattan). The English Channel would be the third leg. The legendary marathon swimmer Pat Gallant-Charette was the current holder of the "Oldest" to have completed the Triple Crown. While I was not in her league, I realized that if I could complete the English Channel swim, I would be older than she was when she swam them. Plenty of incentive there.

One of the first steps is to secure an escort boat for the swim itself. We had been told that it might take 2-3 years to book a boat. At 67 and 65 in 2022 that could put us at 70 and 68 years old during our swim windows. And getting a swim window doesn't guarantee the wind will cooperate

Coach's Column

WENDY NEELY



fall is in the air, with winter around the corner!

Your bed is warm and comfy, but you rarely regret your swim after a workout.

Workouts in the pool have been fun. We've completed our first 4-week cycle of 1 week, focusing one week on each stroke. In some workouts, the presence of the stroke we're working on is faint but powerful. Other days, the strokes are peppered throughout the workout.

It used to be if you felt bad at a stroke, you just chose avoidance. If all strokes are interconnected, what are you missing that's in your favorite or most comfortable stroke?

We've been weaving the golden thread of each stroke together as the week progresses. We'll continue this cycle for the next quarter.

Everyone groans—but we've been connecting the dots between strokes.

THE BIGGEST TAKEAWAYS

- There's a *pull to push* in each stroke.
- There are a *lot of great flyers and breaststrokers* on this team!
- Fly isn't necessarily about volume; it's encapsulating *the perfect stroke* as much as possible.
- We use *free and back* as our pack mules to hold the *fly and breast* together.

We're looking forward to where this next stroke cycle takes us.

Wendy

15 minutes swimming
on a NY Eve plunge
with 1,200 friends



and let you even get a chance to start your swim. The goal is to get a 5 to 7-day window on a 'neap' tide. A neap tide has less difference between the heights of high and low tides thereby meaning less water is pushing you up and down the channel as you swim across it.

Because you are not swimming completely perpendicular to the flow, the more volume of water going through the channel the longer it will take to get across. My swimming speed on a long swim is under 2 miles per hour. While slowing my progress from 2 mph to 1.8 mph might not seem that large, on a 20+ mile swim that adds about an hour and half to the total time.

Despite significant difficulties in connecting with and securing a boat, at the beginning of March 2022 I was able to connect with Captain Eric Hartley who operates the escort boat Pathfinder under the Channel Swimming Association (CSA) oversight body. He indicated that he had a first and second position on the neap tide going from 9/22/23 through 9/27/23. That would be very late in the season, and the weather might be a little more fickle. It would also mean more of the swim would be done in the dark as the days would be shorter. But the water temperatures should still be relatively high for the Channel. But what the heck, it would be in 2023! Wow! On March 10, 2022, we signed our contracts, paid our deposits, and saw ourselves only 1½ years away from attempting an English Channel crossing.

That was only the first step of getting to swim. We also had to get a health clearance via a full medical exam. We had to apply to the CSA with a resume of our marathon swimming accomplishments. We had to do a 6-hour qualifying swim in 60° or colder water. And we had to pull together a crew to provide support from the escort boat. That's all before the logistics of travel and lodging get figured out.

Training involved getting in cold water regularly—once a week throughout the winter of 2022 and 2023. I managed to get into lakes as temperatures dropped to just over 40°. Swims in water that cold were very short—4 to 10 minutes. I would have about 7–8 minutes after getting out of the water, to get out of my suit, dry off, get into warm clothes, crank up the heat in the car, and sip hot water to help keep my core warm. If more than 7–8 minutes passed, the after drop would have me shaking too much to zip zippers, button buttons or do much of anything that required manual dexterity. When lakes got colder than 40°, I could always get into Puget Sound which never got below the mid-40s.

The cold-water training was to get us ready to swim an English Channel mandatory 6-hour qualifier in 60° or colder water. I planned to swim that qualifier in the fall, my training swims following the temperatures as they dropped in the lakes. I did a 5-hour swim in 65° water in Mid-October 2022 and felt confident that the following week I could do a 6-hour swim with the temperatures



Except when you have
Covid

dropping down to below 60°. Then I got Covid. Everything, including training, stopped for ten days. That pushed the qualifying swim to the spring. Lars, Tricia Elmer, Scott Lautman, and I decided to take a trip to San Diego to attempt a qualifier there on March 28th. With the water temperature at La Jolla Shores at 59° and a sunny day forecast, we started at 7 a.m. swimming north. Scott and Tricia had planned to only put in a few hours, while Lars and I hoped to get our qualifier out of the way. However, 3½ hours in and I felt too tired to complete the full 6 hours. I may have talked Lars out of finishing, but whatever the case, we both got out after 4 hours. This failed swim was a good reminder that no matter what you have previously accomplished, each swim provides its own challenges. And the fact that the "Just make it to the next feed" mantra sometimes gets overlooked.

In early May of this year lake temperatures were hovering around 59° and we had a sunny warm stretch coming up. On Friday May 12th, with Scott Lautman as our Observer, Tricia Elmer, Lars, and I left Rob

and Brenda Mason's dock on Angle Lake for our qualifying swim. We went around about 5½ times stopping halfway around and at the dock each time to feed. The temperature was 60° with a warm sun on our backs.

Training continued for the rest of the spring and summer with Long Swim Fridays going 3–4 hours. Three other marathon swims preceded the English Channel attempt (Kingdom Border Buster, Boston Light and Anacapa). Unfortunately, I scheduled them too close together, not giving me enough time to fully recover. However, I did get through them and wrote them up elsewhere.

I also had the challenge of getting a crew together to handle feeds and track my other metrics on the escort boat. Juliet, having crewed for Catalina and Manhattan, indicated that she was interested in helping me complete my Triple Crown and that helped encourage my wife Annalee to also make the trip. My wife's cousin, Bas Aalbers and girlfriend Pauline Hermans lived in Holland and indicated they could get to England with 24 hours' notice to help crew. Problem solved.

Annalee and I decided to make the trip to Dover early—arriving September 4th, to acclimate and see if there were any opportunities to try to swim early. I came close to buying a 4th position on the September 7th neap tide, but the boat Sea Leopard's scheduler rejected the swimmer's transfer request. The advice to read one's boat contract carefully before signing is sage. The swimmer had a medical issue preventing him from swimming, he had me willing to buy his slot, but the boat scheduler appeared to have already transferred the position to someone else, without planning to refund the swimmer's deposit or give him another slot in 2024. Not a problem with my captain, but I did hear of a few captains where swimmers not getting to go were very unhappy with the outcome.

While I made sure to get into Dover Harbor daily to acclimate, a big part of being at what might be considered the epicenter of the marathon swimming world was meeting other swimmers. Some successful, others waiting their chance. We also had plenty of time to travel to nearby towns and historical sites—Dover Castle, Town of Sandwich with an original copy of the Magna Carta and Forest Charter, Folkstone where the Chunnel resurfaces and the Cathedral in Canterbury where Archbishop Thomas Becket was murdered—to name a few.

(continued on page 4)

NORSEMAN EXPERIENCE

by Shawn Crawford

Five years ago I watched a Global Triathlon Network video on the Norseman Xtri race, it looked daunting and impossible (even swimming more than 100m at the time seemed far-fetched). I set my goal to finish the Norseman race not long after watching that video, thinking it would take years to actually get a shot. Fast forward to arriving in Eidfjord, Norway on the week of the race, the feeling of gratitude that I got to participate in the event was overwhelming.



The swim portion of the race was as epicly fun as I hoped it would be with the temps in the Fjord being weirdly all over the place. We were swimming against the tide coming out and despite the race directors advising the best route to take was to hug the coastline and the pack of swimmers I was with turning in towards the coastline, I decided to bee line straight towards the bonfire that marked the last turn. Still 50/50 on if it was a good idea or not.

Straight out of the water you start with a ~20 mile climb, which despite all the butterflies from driving up and down that hill to get in and out of Eidfjord, was my favorite part of the ride. Most memorable moment of the climb was a Norseman citizen yelling out their window “It’s a beautiful country ya?” after catching me looking over at a waterfall that was on the left hand side of the road during the climb. The rest of the ride was relentless —between random downpours and windy sections, I was shivering and questioning my life choices as I pulled into transition 2.

“Tell Shawn skin is waterproof and to put his sneakers on and get moving” was the message my tri coach had my wife pass along to me after I had hopped off my bike. To this day I still don’t understand why that statement was so energizing but it was exactly the kick in the butt I needed to shed the shivers and doubt in my head. The change from biking to running was very welcome, and one of the most memorable parts of the race was the parking lots full of locals waving Norwegian flags singing Norwegian songs to you. I have no idea what they were singing but it brought a smile to my face every time. The last 3 miles of the run towards the top of the mountain was in hail and then a crazy downpour, making getting to the finish line all the sweeter.

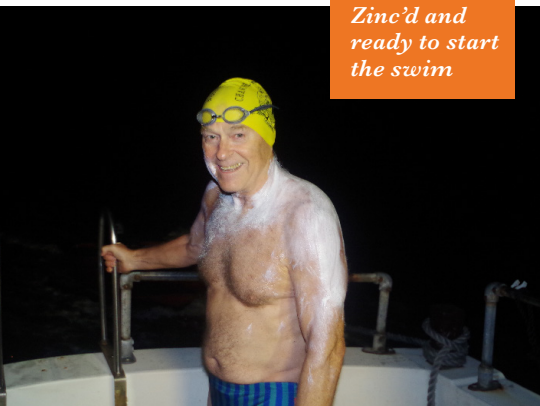
All in all the experience was everything I had hoped it would be, challenging, exhilarating and fulfilling. Big thanks going to Wendy and the Blue Wave group for enabling me to feel confident enough to jump off the ferry and swim the 2.4 miles back to shore. Next up is Starvation Xtri (Utah) in 2024 and then Celtman Xtri (Scotland) in 2025 which includes a jelly infested swim in the ocean. 🌊



(English Channel, continued from page 2)

My early arrival in Dover also did pay off regarding my Channel attempt, as Captain Eric Hartley said he would take me, weather permitting, at the end of the earlier neap tide if all his other swimmers had gone. A string of good weather and my swim chance moved from September 22nd to September 13th, the start of the next spring tide. This did involve missing Juliet from my crew as she was not scheduled to arrive until the 20th. We made quick arrangements to have Bas and Pauline arrive the afternoon of the 13th for a quick class in crewing.

Another lucky occurrence was the arrival at Dover Beach of Eri Utsinomiya, our 20 Bridges kayaker. She had provided top of the line support at Manhattan and I thought she might be able to assist now. I introduced her to Annalee, who had begun to worry that she, through some crewing failure, would be the cause of me not making it to France. Eri joined us in our rented flat and gave a doctoral level class in crewing—helping to put Annalee's mind at ease. Unfortunately, Eri was scheduled to fly out the next day so couldn't help crew for me.



Zinc'd and ready to start the swim

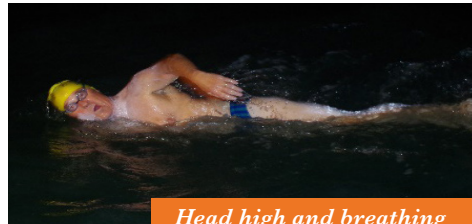
The Swim Itself

With the crew having arrived in Dover, passports provided to the authorities and winds subsiding, my crew and I headed to the old Dover Marina. Captain Eric Hartley was on his boat having dinner. He was surprised to see us a good 40 minutes early. Keith Oiller, our CSA assigned Observer was with him and 1st Mate Gary Watkins arrived a few minutes later. Our early arrival gave Keith time to read us the CSA Channel Crossing Rules and Captain Eric time to give us a safety briefing.

At 9:30 p.m. we pushed off for the 45-minute ride to Samphire Hoe where the swim would start. Samphire Hoe is where the British half of the earth excavated to build the Chunnel (Channel tunnel

connecting England and France) was deposited. At 10-minutes out, Annalee spread Vaseline on chafe points and zinc oxide on my back, neck, arms, and legs. The zinc would protect me from the next day's sun.

The steep shingle (small stone) beach in the dark made for a bit of a scramble to get above the tide, but after doing so raised my arms to signal I was ready. At 10:20 p.m. I entered the water and began my swim. Winds were forecast to be high for the first 3–4 hours, but then would begin to subside. As I breathe predominately to my right, I started on the port side of the boat so that I could easily watch it. My first feed was to be one hour in. Before that occurred, the crew summoned me to the boat and directed me to the starboard side of the boat, which would shelter me a bit from the wind and waves.



Head high and breathing to the left—not fun

This forced me to breathe to my left to keep an eye on the boat. That I do much less efficiently. My head comes up a bit higher, making my legs drop a little deeper, creating more drag. Not a lot, but over 21 miles it would take its toll. After struggling for about 2 hours, I asked if the waters had calmed on the other side of the boat. The captain told me to stay where I was for “a little longer”.

In the dark, I measure time by my feeds, and after my first feed, all the remaining ones were to be at 30-minute intervals. I had plenty of time to run worst-case scenarios of the swim over and over in my head. These thoughts included: did I train enough; did I start tapering too soon; what if the wind gets too strong; fear of what's below me; that real or imaginary shoulder pain; and such. These are the thoughts I had to quiet to give myself a chance to complete the swim.

So how much was “a little longer” that I had to keep breathing to my left? One feed, two feeds... Turns out it was 4 feeds. The longer I swam on the starboard side the more I let my head wander to how cold I was getting and how much total swim I had in front of me. Somewhere in this part of the swim I

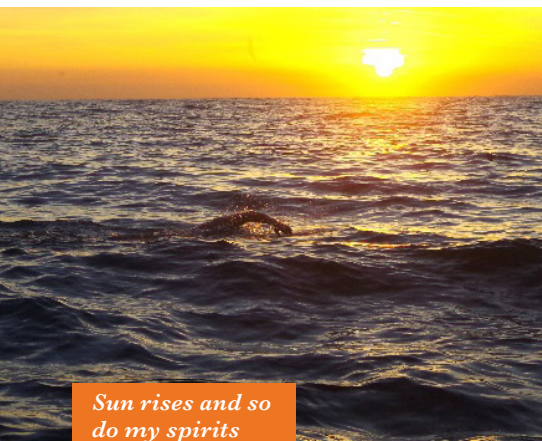
was thinking about what it would be like to get out. I had told myself from past swims the trick was to only think about making it to the next feed, not how much further I had to go to get to France. Sometimes though your brain doesn't cooperate. The feeds interrupt your replaying the bad scenarios in your head. And at one of them, I had my crew and observer start cheering and encouraging me on, rather than asking me how I was doing. That seemed to get me out of my negative loop.

After that 2 added hours on the starboard side of the boat, I asked again about how calm the waters were on the other side of the boat. I got directed to swim behind the boat and over to the port side. That did pick up my spirits and my speed. Now, about 4½ hours into the swim I was finally back to swimming on the side I wanted with the waves diminishing. At one of my following feeds, I asked to be told when we entered the “separation zone”, thinking we must be getting close.

The separation zone is a 1-mile-wide area in the center of the channel where ships and tankers are prohibited. To prevent collisions, on one side of the separation zone vessels go up channel (north easterly) and on the other side they go down channel (south westerly). Finally, after a few more feeds, the captain alerted me that in 50 meters I would be in the separation zone. This was a near crushing disappointment. I had been counting my feeds and figured I had been going 7½ hours. The separation zone represents roughly the midway point of the Channel. That made me think I had another 7½ hours and it would be a 15-hour crossing. I had thought I was going faster than that.

“ I had plenty of time to run worst-case scenarios of the swim over and over in my head... did I train enough; did I start tapering too soon; what if the wind gets too strong; fear of what's below me; that real or imaginary shoulder pain; and such. These are the thoughts I had to quiet to give myself a chance to complete the swim.”

At the next feed I asked how much longer until 1st light. The answer was about 90 minutes. This gave me something new to chew on as I was swimming. I began to question my earlier timekeeping, since adding 1½ hours to my calculated swim time would put 1st light at sometime after 7 a.m. I knew that 1st light should be closer to 6 a.m. At the next feed my crew confirmed that I was off by an hour in my feed count. That meant that I had hit the separation zone at 6½ hours, not 7½ hours and my swim might be closer to 13 than 15 hours. By 6 a.m. the sky was getting lighter and with a few breaths to my left I could see where the sun would soon be rising.



Sun rises and so do my spirits

While I don't mind swimming at night, sunrise really does lift my spirits. I know the air temperature will rise, I can feel the sun on my back, it is easier to see the boat and at some point I would get to see France. Before the swim I could see France from Dover Harbor. However, from down in the water swimming, I couldn't see it until I was about 3–4 miles offshore. By this time the tide had long since switched and I was being pushed down channel. The earlier tide pushing me up channel where I was slightly swimming into the tide had seen my speed drop to just over 2 kilometers per hour. Now, going across the tide while being pushed down channel saw me get a boost and I was going just over 6 kilometers per hour.

I was now about 10 hours into the swim. For me the swim switched from a mental exercise at the beginning of the swim to a physical one halfway across. The beginning had me battling doubts rattling around in my head about how much further I had to go. Halfway across my mental confidence was under control and I needed to focus on physically finishing the swim. Thankfully the early chop had almost completely subsided.



Pace picked up with France in sight

Somewhere in this section, the captain let me know that I had to pick up my pace. I headed out and picked up my arm pace knowing that I wanted to get past an inshore channel buoy before the tide changed again. I started counting my strokes which I had been doing off and on during the swim. During the crossing my crew would give me a five-minute warning before each feed, and I would count off roughly 250 strokes and then they would signal me to stop for the feed. So, I knew I was going about 50 strokes a minute. As I accelerated my turnover, my stroke count went up to a high of 66.

I counted 500 strokes, then 500 more and then 500 more. At my slower pace that would be 30 minutes of swimming. Even at my faster pace it should have been 25 minutes. But no one was signaling me a 5-minute warning to feed. I knew I couldn't keep this pace up too much longer, but also knew that if I didn't get to that inshore buoy, I might have a much, much longer swim.

“While I don't mind swimming at night, sunrise really does lift my spirits. I know the air temperature will rise, I can feel the sun on my back, it is easier to see the boat and at some point I would get to see France.”

If I didn't make enough progress the reversing tide would start pushing me back up channel away from a receding shoreline. After 45 minutes they signaled me to stop for a feed. I let the captain and my crew know that I couldn't keep that pace up much longer. The captain indicated that I could return to a sustainable pace. He said that as the tide switched, we would look to catch the eddy it would create on the east side of Cap Gris-Nez and get pulled into shore.

It was roughly at this time that I started to see lots of jellyfish—clear with a dark fringe at the bottom edge of their body. One brushed my left leg, and I thought I felt a bit of sting, but that never really developed into anything. I did get

stung on my right hand which I felt for an hour or so—my first ever jellyfish sting. The closer we got to the coast, the more jellyfish I saw, but most were far enough below me not to pose a problem.

I could see the tide switch as the lighthouse on Cap Gris-Nez which had been at my 10 o'clock, shortly moved to my 2 o'clock. Not to worry, about 2 feeds later I saw the boat crew getting the dingy ready to escort me to the beach. The Pathfinder boat was too big to take in closer to shore, thus the need for the dingy. Gary Watkins, the 1st mate, hopped in and tried to direct me to the nearest landing spot. Apparently, I had my own idea where that was, and he ended up following me a bit further than I otherwise needed to go. Luckily, I ended up on a sandy beach. I surprised myself by how easily I stood up in the surf and walked up onto the beach. I got above the high-water mark and raised my hands to signal the boat I had made it.



In France on solid land above the tide

Only a handful of people were on the beach and paid me no mind. I headed back into the water and got on a boogie board that Gary used to tow me back to the Pathfinder. I somehow managed to climb back up the ladder to the boat deck and was congratulated by my crew. They immediately went to work scrubbing off the zinc oxide on my back, arms, and legs so that I could get into my dry robe to warm up.

Road ^{TO} → Ironman

by
**Michael
Fairbanks**

**What are you thinking? Are you okay?
Are you crazy? Why are you doing that?**

All questions I get when I told people I'm training for/signed up for an Ironman triathlon.

My typical short answer is 'I make poor choices.'

Here is the longer answer.

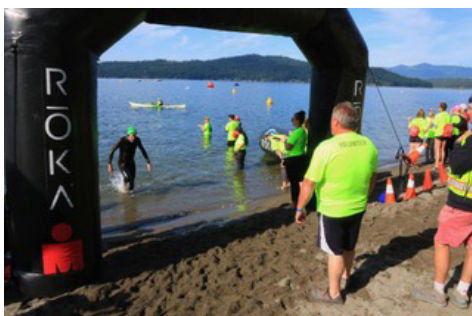
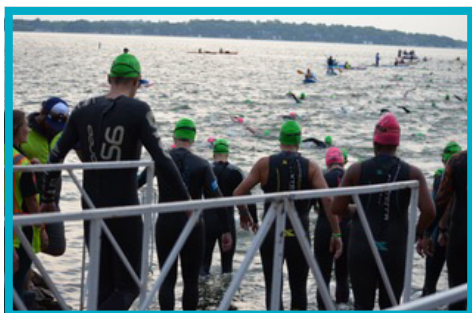
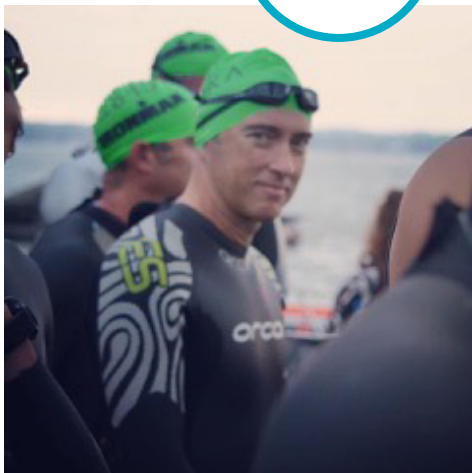
I didn't wake up one day and say to myself 'I'm going to do an Ironman.' Slow incremental steps got me there.

I've been a runner off and on throughout my life. For the last 15 years I've been running more consistently and for longer distances. I started to do distance runs on the weekends and eventually got to 12 miles being my standard. But I never did any races. My thought was, 'why pay to run when I can just... run?' At some point my sister started running too. She came out to visit and we ran the Rock n Roll half marathon. I enjoyed the carnival-like atmosphere of that run. But it wasn't a challenge. I could do 12 miles, 13.1 wasn't much of a stretch. So, I decided to try the marathon the next year. It was nice having something to train toward and it provided me with a challenge. Despite my claims of 'one and done', at some point I decided to do it again the next year. It has become a ritual ever since.

At some point I bought a bike to commute to work. Partly for the exercise, partly because of the erratic bus schedule on my ride home. Having a bike led me to using it for non-commuting, weekend rides or I would lengthen the ride of my commute by taking the long way home, making a 5 mile ride a 25-mile ride.

My relationship with water is an interesting one.

When I was a child there were times I would get upset or hurt and start crying. I would cry to such a degree that I would start hyperventilating. My mother, not being able to bear watching me in such distress, would splash a glass of water in my face. It startled me and I would start breathing normally. But it had the unintended effect of not liking getting my face wet. Add to that the fact that splashing water at each other is what kids do in pools. I got picked on by other kids when in pools, got dunked a lot, which meant that I didn't have much trust for people in the water. To this day I have a towel that I hang over the shower door so I can dry my face after I get it wet. All those things meant that I never really learned to swim as a child.



While the water temperature at Samphire Hoe started at about 66°, it rose as we went across the channel and approached 70° on the French inshore waters. Still, being in that water for 13 hours 54 minutes chills all your extremities. As the colder blood returns to your core, you experience the after drop. I was quickly bundled into my Dry Robe, hat, and neck warmer and given heated water zip lock bags for my armpits and crotch to warm that blood as it returned to my core.

At my request, I was also given tissues to roll up and stuff up my nose. After that long in the water, I knew only too well that my sinuses would otherwise drain for hours. The almost 2-hour ride back to Dover gave me plenty of time to warm up. In fact, I started getting too warm in the afternoon sun. As we arrived in port, I thanked everyone and got pictures of those that helped make my crossing possible.



Annalee, Capt Eric, Gary, Bas, Pauline and Keith (kneeling)

So, a very special thanks to crew members Annalee Rothenberg, Bas Aalbers, Pauline Hermans, & Mate Gary Watkins, Observer Keith Oiller, and Captain Eric Hartley. Without them I would not have made it.

Finally, I did manage to get the record as the oldest swimmer to ever have completed the Triple Crown of Marathon Swims (Catalina, Manhattan, and English Channel) with an average age of just over 67 years. Andy Warhol was famously quoted as saying, "In the future, everyone will be famous for 15 minutes." While I'm not famous, I feel lucky to have held the record for 15 days, before Ed Horne added another 9 months or so to my record. Congratulations to him for doing so while completing his Manhattan swim during the State of Emergency when NY received over 3 inches of rain. He really earned it.



There are times I took adult swim classes, but since I never swam regularly, any progress I made was quickly lost. But water is not a fear that I don't face. I spent time learning how to tread water so that I could get scuba certified. A strange accomplishment for someone with anxiety in the water. Well, maybe anxiety 'in the water' isn't exactly correct. No issue with being in boats or on innertubes. Give me a life jacket and I'm happy floating in the middle of the ocean. It's when my face goes in the water that I have the problem. Even with scuba, I have to ride through the first few minutes of anxiety when I go under the surface before I get to a place where I'm comfortable.

So, in order to do an Ironman I had to go from not being a swimmer to being able to swim 2.4 miles. Simple as that.

I needed to get better at swimming but my anxiety in the water makes it difficult. I could swim for a little while, but as I put effort into it, my breathing becomes harder, and that causes my anxiety to flare up, which causes my breathing to become irregular.... Rinse. Repeat. I reached out to a friend who taught beginner adult swim classes for advice. She put me in touch with Wendy. Wendy wanted to take an 'unconventional' approach to my swimming issues. Since we were in the middle of Covid lockdown, all options were unconventional.

We started meeting once a week for zoom classes where she tailored the exercises and meditations to me. She also arranged to do an open water swim sessions every couple of weeks.

The zoom sessions focused on breathing correctly from the navel and breathing when moving. I have definitely noticed a change in my breathing pattern and lung capacity after doing this work for several months. I have incorporated some of the exercises into my morning warm-up routines which seems to give me a little more energy to get moving. I have even used some of the techniques to help process/quiet my thoughts during some emotional turmoil that I went through.

The open water sessions were more challenging. Wendy did a good job of pushing me past my comfort zone but not to the point that I started to freak out (or would help distract me/talk with me when I started to get anxious). The first few sessions were me just getting used to being in water that was over my head and trusting in myself that I could keep myself afloat. I was in a wet suit, which made the floating part easier and I had a swim buoy that I had to rely on more in the beginning.

Slowly we were able to increase the distance of the swim, and the breaks I needed to take came less frequently. Eventually pools started to open again. I joined the Sunday morning workouts with Blue Wave Aquatics, and did other pool sessions on my own. It wasn't easy. I spent more than a few times crying in my car

after a pool session from all the pent-up anxiety. And there were moments when I stood in my driveway in front of my car for 15 minutes, swim bag in hand, trying to convince myself to get to the pool/lake. Sometimes I won those battles, sometimes I didn't.

Eventually I got to the point where I was doing longer distances in the lake, and even had some friends join me for a 2-mile loop. There were a lot of pauses in the water for me to 'catch my breath'. But I was able to do that distance within the Ironman time restriction, barely. I did some shorter distance triathlons so I could get used to them and to gain experience swimming next to a large group of people. I never swam fast, but I finished them all.

I signed up for the Ironman in Madison, Wisconsin. I have friends who live there and family in southern Wisconsin, so it was nice that I would have my own cheer squad.

The race day started off rocky, with my swimming bag going missing when I went to the bathroom. I didn't panic and just waited about 10 minutes for the person who inadvertently took mine to return for their bag.

The water temperature was nice. The warm up swim went well. I waited my turn for the staggered start. And then it was Go time!


Things didn't go as I had hoped. My anxiety flared up. The water had started to get choppy. And there were so many people in the water. I kept getting swum over by people who were doing their second lap. Sadly, I wasn't able to finish the swim in time, but they let me continue the ride and the run—both of which went really well!

It certainly was disappointing, but I did what few people can do. And I faced one of my fears.

When I got back to Seattle, I decided to continue with the Sunday morning swim workouts. I wanted to see what swimming was like when I didn't have the pressure of this immense goal looming over me. Several months later Wendy looked at me in the water and said jokingly "Who are you? I just see this swimmer now." I was able to focus more on the drills and technique without all the pressure.

After a year, I started to get the itch again. I wanted to try another Ironman and see if I could be successful in the swim. So I signed up for the Ironman in Couer d'Alene 2023. I had a better idea of what to expect and kept up with most of my training. I was a much better swimmer now, but 2.4 miles is still a long swim for most people.

The swim was much better. Less anxiety, but it was still there. Definitely don't like being swum over. Time wasn't great, but I crossed the finish line!

What's next? I'm looking at Ironman Canada (Penticton) in 2025. Its main appeal is that the swim is a point-to-point. No loops where I get swum over! 

Membership Update

It's been a while! I was taking a look at the last membership update that I provided for the newsletter and discovered that it was written in the days leading up to Champs- nearly nine months ago! Since that time, we have had quite a few changes. For a short while, we enjoyed a very successful partnership with the Tacoma Lawn and Tennis Club to bring Masters swimming to some of their members, and to offer a new workout venue for ours. While the partnership with TLTC wrapped up a few months ago, it did bring some new faces to our team!

We have also had lots of swimmers give our two-for-one Introductory Workouts a try, and many enjoyed the experience so much that they stayed! Thank you for creating a warm and welcoming atmosphere for all, and please give a big (if maybe a little belated) welcome to our newest members:

Ken Blaszak	Erika Jackman
Marcus Condotta	Jordan Konecny
Ellista Du	Alexandra Luque
Kristina Duca	Jennifer Ogle
Teresa Enslin	Caralee Rendell
Donatto Gallardo	Bonnie Ruf
Lorelei Geldien	Maggie Sockness
Sami Hendricks	Madi Uekawa
Tori Homer	Russell Wise

If you have friends or family who are interested in swimming with a Masters team, please let them know that January 2024 will be Try Masters Swimming month. It's a great time to participate in a couple of Blue Wave workouts at no cost. More information will be available

on the Blue Wave Aquatics website soon!

Keep on swimming!

Nellis



If you have any membership-related questions, please feel free to reach out to me at Membership@BlueWave-Aquatics.com