



## **“Go the Distance” September, 2008**

### **Highlights**

#### **GTD September “Deep Thought on Fitness”** (Linda Shoenberger)

*Morning fitness swim workouts are a wonderful opportunity to start your day off with a few laughs, a few deep breaths and a great boost in energy.*

#### **September Highlight: How do you “go the distance”?**

*Elaine Kornbau Howley (30-34, 463.02 miles year to date) swims a bunch of long distance open water swims. Last year she completed the 12.5 mile race in Key West and the 41K in Lake George in the same month (see GTD 2007 August Highlights!). So, one might wonder where she would swim this year after having such great adventures last year? In August she completed the 8-mile Boston Light Swim – but apparently that was just a warm-up for her latest swim – read on!*

*Hi Mary-*

*I swam 42.22 miles in September, nearly half of which were done as a successful Catalina Channel crossing. I got across on Monday, September 22 in a time of 10 hours 57 minutes 44 seconds and am just pleased as punch that I was able to complete the crossing in less than 11 hours, my target time. We left from Doctor's Cove on the northern end of Catalina Island at 12:13 am and arrived at 11:11am at Long Point (near San Pedro, CA). I was lucky to have had great weather and an even better crew to help me across. The water temp was good- started at about 69 and stayed in the mid-to-upper 60s for most of the crossing before dropping to about 62 degrees a mile off the coast. It was an awesome experience and I'm thrilled to have had the opportunity to do it. I attached a couple of photos here.*

*I'm psyched to learn that GTD will be back again in 2009- yay!*

*Happy swimming in October!*

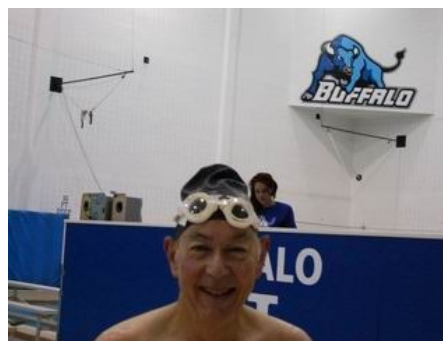
*Elaine*



*Elaine swimming (top), taking a well deserved rest at the “finish” (left) and sporting a big ol proud grin (right)! Where will she will “go the distance” in 2009? Stay tuned ...*

## **Meet GTD Swimmer: Thomas Weber**

**(75-79 age group, 162.01 miles to date).**



*Greta van Meeteren: Tom sent us his wonderful story, and I'm sure you will enjoy reading this. Speaking of a love for swimming!! Here it is:*

I was listening to one of the US Olympic athletes during an interview on TV the other night. She remarked that she had to pinch her self to believe what she has accomplished. Funny thing – I've often used that expression when telling people about my swimming.

Why so? Well, when I was born 78 years ago, swimming pools were rare. In 1937, we moved to Hinsdale, Illinois where I would continue to live until I went to college. When I was seven, my parents sent me for swimming lessons with one of the local coaches. I'll never forget those drives to the pool. The closest pool was about eight or ten miles from our home. I have no idea how many lessons I took, but came away with barely the rudiments of the "dog paddle." Summer camp some years later added a few "refinements" to the dog paddle, but I would never swim in water over my head.

Throughout junior high and high school, I enjoyed basketball, baseball, and table tennis, but "enjoyment" was the extent of it. There was no public pool in Hinsdale and the high school did not have one. I was not very athletic, and spent most of my efforts on academics and music. In 1948 I entered the five-year program in Chemical Engineering at Cornell University in Ithaca, NY. All students were required to take a swimming test; I recall that it was two lengths of a 25-yard pool. I dog-paddled my way through that, but just barely – fortunately, technique didn't count. I thought that my swimming days were over, perhaps forever. I had begun to smoke cigarettes and an occasional cigar when I entered college. Over the next ten years I built up that habit up to the point where I was smoking two packs a day. One day about the middle of September, 1959, I said to myself, "enough is enough" and dropped the habit "cold turkey," as the saying goes. As I write this essay, it was 49 years ago. I mention this because, as most people know, swimming and cigarettes don't mix. Had I not ended that habit, I would not be swimming today, and might not have been alive to swim at all.

### **"Life Begins at 47"**

In 1977 as I turned 47, there was a confluence of significant events in my life. My wife and I began taking our children to a nearby middle school where a "family swim" was held on Friday nights. I suppose the cost was 30 or 40 dollars for a dozen or so swims. Our son, Bill, was about 7, and it was evident that he took to the water in a way the rest of us didn't. I'd swim a few yards, take a breather, and then swim a few more. I suppose in the course of the evening, I'd swim the equivalent of two laps across the 25-yard pool. That was enough for me – I'd be "bushed" so-to-speak, but I hadn't forgotten that desire to learn to swim the right way.

In the summer of 1977, I was working part-time in Credit-Free Programs at the State University of NY at Buffalo. Two consecutive three-week "learn-to-swim" courses were being offered, taught by two University coaches, one of them being the head coach of the swimming team. Because I was on the staff of Credit-Free Programs, I could "audit" these courses. The pool, which is on the old South Campus, has six lanes and is 25 yards long. I made sufficient progress in the first three weeks to sign up for the second segment. After six weeks, I had "mastered" the free-style, breaststroke, and backstroke, at least enough to stay up. After those six weeks, I felt pretty confident. I started swimming laps two days a week in a lap-swimming program at one of the local schools. I recall that I could swim a few laps, then take a breather, then swim a few more, and so on. In the course of an hour, I could get through something like forty laps.

About 1980, my Department of Chemical Engineering moved north to our new Amherst Campus. Shortly thereafter the new pool in Alumni Arena opened. It has an Olympic-sized 50-meter pool, eight lanes wide. About half the year we swim 50's, and other half widths of 25 yards – about two dozen lanes. I began swimming about a thousand yards, a couple of times a week, but before long, I was over there every weekday that I could make it. At various times, I alternated swimming with workouts in the weight room but swimming was my first love, and I no longer go to the weight room.

In the mid-90's I occasionally ran into Professor Peter Lansbury in the Chemistry Department that was still over on the old South Campus, "Pete" liked our pool better, and so he would drive to our campus for his workouts. He told me that he and another swimmer, Ed Harkey, were going to swim a Masters one-hour Postal Swim. By that time I'd gotten over taking "breathers" and I thought it would be interesting to give it a try. In looking back at the records for the January, 1997 swim, I found in my age group (65-69), I ranked 31<sup>st</sup> out of 37, not bad, I thought for someone entering a competitive sport at the age of 66. In 1998, we swam the 3000-yd Postal Swim. I was 68 and Pete, 65. Hence, we were in the same age group. Seven swam it and I came last.

As I've "aged up," the number of swimmers in my age group has dwindled. Last January when I was 77 and in the 75-79 age group, 18 people swam and I came in 13<sup>th</sup>. I swam the 3000-yard event in October, 2007 there were only four swimmers, and I came in 3<sup>rd</sup>. (I think there is a message in this...) I hasten to mention that one of my fellow swimmers at our pool is Annie Szuis, an 88-year old swimmer who recently won four medals in competition. I'm reasonably certain that at 78, I'm the second oldest in our pool.

I'm also doing a couple of other semi-competitive things. One is the February Fitness Challenge hosted by the Tualatin Hills Barracudas in Beaverton, Oregon. To enter, one merely pays a modest fee and then reports yardage for the month of February and the number of days swum that month. Swimmers are ranked in age groups. A second competition that I am in is the President's Challenge (Presidentschallenge.org). Similar in concept to GTD, one logs the time that he or she exercises; in my case, my exercise is "vigorous swimming." As it turns out, for one hour of vigorous swimming, one receives 638 points. For me that is the equivalent of about 1.25 miles. There are four levels of awards: 20,000 points for Bronze; 45,000 for Silver, and 80,000 for Gold. Then, a couple of years ago, a Platinum award was established for 500,000 points. Over the past four and a half years, I have accumulated 3 Bronze, 3 Silver, and 3 Gold medals, and I'm currently 93% of the way to Platinum. (I'm wondering if I will be invited to Washington when I reach the half-million point!). For what it's worth, I figured out that for me, 500K represents about 980 miles. So, someday, I may reach the equivalent of having swum across the United States, if I haven't already. And last, but not least, I've been in GTD since it began. It, like all of the others, is a great program.

Last year, my wife and I moved out of our home of 41 years (about 2 ½ miles from the pool). As the moving date approached, I was so occupied with the move that I *had* to give up swimming for a couple of months. But we now live in a Continuing Life Care development just a little over four miles from the pool – being close to the pool was a must in deciding where to move!

Besides swimming on five days a week, I enjoy music and my piano, and I am involved in some of the activities at in our retirement community. I am an avid reader of non-fiction. My wife and I enjoy traveling, especially visiting our daughter and her family in Wichita and our son and his wife in southern New Jersey. Both of our children are Chemical Engineers as well, though are in various offshoots of that profession. Our son-in-law is a Mechanical engineer and our daughter-in-law is also a Chemical Engineer.

My workout is basically an hour, Monday through Friday, covering a mile and a quarter in that time. I swim only free-style. I swim with Pete and four or five others, mostly in their 60's. I try to work my appointments and other meetings around my pool schedule. In my judgment, the business of exercise, only works if you are determined. If one gets into the habit of occasionally skipping day, pretty soon it will be two days.

A funny story? About ten years ago, Pete, Ed, and I were to swim the one-hour Postal on a Saturday morning at ten. I had the time forms and was going to give them theirs when I got to the pool. Just as I was about to leave, I hit my head on the corner of a shelf in the garage – when I put my hand up to my head, I discovered blood. I thought it was not bad enough to keep me out of the pool, but my wife insisted I go to the emergency room of a nearby hospital. (The doctor gave me a couple of stitches.) Needless to say, I couldn't contact them, and I was so far down the list in the Emergency Room that I couldn't reach them before our starting time. In the end, I recall that they called my wife when I didn't show up, and they worked around that some way. That week, I had to attend a professional meeting, and upon returning to Buffalo, I headed straight to the Emergency Room to have the stitches removed, and then went straight to the pool where I did the swim.

Finally, what have been the benefits for me of swimming all these years? Well, in relating them, I feel as though I would be "preaching to the choir." Needless to say, I'm convinced that my good health is closely

related to my regular exercise. Last week, I had my annual checkup with my family doctor. As I was leaving his office, he asked me if I was still swimming. I said “yes,” and he turned to me as said, “Keep it up.”

And just a few days ago I was talking to one of my swimming friends, Steve. We were talking about the costs of this “hobby.” Steve works up in Lockport, about ten miles north of here. The cost of a recreation pass at the Arena is something under two hundred dollars a year. Steve remarked that the pool facilities at Alumni Arena are cheap. But I said that in his case, he had to drive twenty miles round trip three days a week when he comes to the pool. He said the cost is irrelevant, as he reminded me how one time a few years ago we both drove through a blizzard to get there, only to find that the school had closed down. He said that what counts is the way he feels after his work out, as he pointed his finger at his head. I knew exactly what he was talking about.

## **Meet GTD Swimmer: Amy Klodzinski (30-34 age group, 141.38 miles to date).**

*Greta van Meeteren: Amy is a VERY delightful swimmer to meet; I think that you will agree! As is the case with many of us, “swimming became Amy’s life” – can you relate?*

*I’m going to start with my swimming life, since that’s what brought me to GTD! I started swimming competitively when I was 11, after my swimming teacher encouraged me to be on the swim team. I kept at it, continued to improve, and swimming became my life.*

*I swam year round on the Bend Swim Club (Oregon) and on my high school team. I was never the best swimmer, just average, but I loved swimming, competing, and being a part of a team. Like many swimmers do in high school, I became a lifeguard and started teaching swimming lessons. Teaching swimming was where I excelled and it laid the foundation to my eventual career as an elementary school teacher.*

*After high school, I would swim off and on with the Masters groups in the places I was living, but I wasn’t consistent. Eventually I moved to a very small town that didn’t have a pool and I didn’t swim at all for at least 5 years!*

*Just two years ago, my husband and I moved from Washington State to Portland, Maine. We had no reason to move other than wanting to explore the east coast (I’ve always lived in the Northwest). Not long after the move, I sought out a local masters group to swim with. I started swimming with them once or twice a week. It had been such a long time, and it took me a while to get back to feeling good in the water. I started going to local meets and improving on my times. Swimming started feeling good again. It was the New England Short Course Championships in 2007 that really got me going again. I had such a great time competing and getting to know my fellow teammates (our team is spread out in Maine and we only see each other at meets). I had such a euphoric feeling afterwards; I couldn’t stop what I’ve worked so hard for.*

*Now I am swimming 3-4 times a week with my master’s team and going to every swimming event I can. I love both pool and open water swimming. It’s the variety I enjoy. In the pool I swim all of the strokes (free and fly are my favorites). My local swimming group is big on the open water swimming and they meet once or twice a week to swim in a local lake or in the FREEZING cold ocean. I try to attend a handful of those swims during the summer. I would guess that 75% of my weekends this summer were occupied with an event that involved swimming: a couple of New England long course meets, a few open water swimming championships (Virginia & Oregon), a triathlon, and a couple of open water swimming events for causes (fundraisers).*

*As far as my career, it has always involved teaching. Currently, I work for a non-profit organization and I run an after school program in my neighborhood that provides homework assistance and FUN activities! Many of the students in the neighborhood come from immigrant or refugee families from Africa. Not only do they need a safe place to go after school, but they also need extra assistance with their schoolwork as their parents have limited English skills and are*

unable to help them. I love my job and helping the kids that walk through the door everyday; the kids aren't the only ones learning!

I am also back in the water teaching swim lessons. The school in my neighborhood provides swimming lessons to 3<sup>rd</sup> graders once a week. I get to share my love of swimming to many of the students who I also see after school. Some of the kids have never been in a swimming pool before and seeing them get in or put their heads underwater for the first time is unbelievable.

When I'm not in the water or at work, I enjoy photography and traveling. Swimming helps me with both of these non-swimming hobbies as I travel to compete and I take pictures of my teammates swimming. Everything is interrelated! My husband is not a swimmer and not a big fan of attending the actual events (I thought everyone loved watching swimming!), but he likes to travel to the different places and explore on his own.

I am participating in GTD because I wanted to see how far I actually swim in a year. This year, since it is my first, is my base year. As the years go on, I'll try to beat the year before. My goal for 2008 is to swim 250 miles. I just hit the halfway mark in August – so I'll have to pick up the pace a little the next few months.

This is a perfect opportunity to thank the people who supported me and taught me everything I know about swimming (some of them are current GTD participants!). Firstly, I'd like to thank my mom for letting me pursue something that interested me and for all of the time she spent being my taxi to and from practice and meets. And to all of my coaches: my club coach, Mark Burnett (BSC); my high school coaches: Mike Carew (feature GTD participant a few months ago) and Cathy Imwalle; and my master's coaches: Bob Bruce (Central Oregon Masters), and Jeanette Strickland (GreaterPortland Swimming, Maine). Without them, I wouldn't be the person I am today. All of the people I know who swim are great people and I'm honored to be a part of such a great group of people.



Right: Amy (right) with Son Ngyuen and Cheryl Daly at the New England Long Course Meters Championship in June, 2008. Amy and Son are the only 2 participants in GTD from Maine – but their enthusiasm and energy are so contagious that I expect to see more of their local pals joining us soon!

Left: Amy (right) with Cheryl Daly at the Oregon Open Water Championships in August, 2008.

## **Meet GTD Swimmer: Jon Schieltz (70-74 age group, 288.44 miles to date).**

*Greta van Meeteren: Swimming does such wonderful things for people – and here is another story to confirm this. Wait until you meet Jon Schieltz – a fascinating swimmer’s story is coming your way – enjoy!!*

About 3 years ago I retired from the semiconductor industry. I was a process engineer and engineering manager for the fabrication of integrated circuits. My job involved making very high-speed bipolar integrated circuits. I very much enjoyed being on the leading edge of technology. With my retirement my wife, Jane, is continuing to update a list of projects for me to do, which grows faster than I can keep up with. I have a reasonably sized garden where I try to raise unique vegetables, at least vegetables that are not native to the northwest.

I met my wife, Jane, at a roller skating rink while I was attending the Colorado School of Mines. We have 3 children and 2 granddaughters. My oldest son, David, lives in Atlanta, GA with his wife Kathy and our two granddaughters, Sophia and Abigail. My youngest son lives in Seattle, WA and the youngest of the family, Suzanne, my daughter lives in Durango, where she is an Age Group swim coach. She has coached in Coral Springs, FL and Albuquerque, NM.

When I retired, I thought I would have time to relax and take it easy, however it seems that I am busier than ever now.

My interest in swimming came from my daughter. She swam for the Tualatin Hills Swim Club in Beaverton, OR. As parents we attended all her swim meets. So as not to get bored at all the swim meets, I became an official and ultimately became interested in the swim strokes mechanics. So in my late 50’s I started lap swimming just to get a feel for the different strokes. It didn’t take me long to realize that my strokes definitely needed improvement and I joined the Tualatin Hills Barracudas in 1992, a USMS swim team. My wife says that I have a lot of energy, which I attribute to swimming. My doctor says I am in great shape and encourages me to continue swimming.

Since my work was located within 5 minutes of our 50 meter pool, I would swim during our lunch break. We are fortunate in that our swim club has a morning practice 6 days/week, a noon practice 5 days/week, and an evening practice 4 days/week. All our practices are coached workouts. While I was working, I attended practices 3-4 times/week. Now that I am retired, I swim 5 days/week at our noon practice with the Tualatin Hills Barracudas. Those of us in the slow lane usually swim 2,000 to 2,500 yards/workout. Basically I am a slow fitness swimmer; however I do compete in some meets and special events. I compete in our hosted pentathlon meet basically as a benchmark to see how I progress from year to year. I compete in our state Association meet because at my age, 69, I can usually score points for our team. Every once in a while, our coach will talk me into going to a meet, for example I competed in 3 events at the USMS LC Nationals meet held at Mt. Hood, OR. Non-swim meet benchmarks for me are the 1-hour postal swims and the February Fitness Challenge (how far you can swim in the month of February).

I seem to be following in my daughter’s footsteps, she swam the 50 and 100 yard freestyle and 100 yard butterfly. Those are the strokes I like; however I am still working toward a 100 fly, but love the 50 fly. I prefer swimming in a pool, open water swimming is too cold for me and there

is no line at the bottom for me to follow. My sister lives on the Sacramento River and her husband swims in the river. During a recent visit, I swam with her husband in the river. My one and only open water swim.

Since our swim club started hosting the February Fitness Challenge, I have swum the event every year. In doing so, I got used to recording my daily distance. It got so ingrained in me that when the GTD came along I decided to enter it, since I was already recording my daily swim distances. With all the graphs and statistics, the GTD makes it interesting to follow your progress. You can see how you are doing individually as well as how you compare with other swimmers across the country. My goal for 2008 is to average 1 mile/day or to achieve the 365+ miles for the year goal.

I am an avid F-1 motor racing fan and have generated interest in the sport with my lane swim mates. My hobbies are collecting wines, gardening, and coin collecting. I am the data analyst for the February Fitness Challenge helping Dave Radcliff. I enjoy using Access and Excel computer programs for supporting our swim club activities. I have served as our club's representative to the Aquatics Advisory Committee for our Park District since 1994. Now that both my wife and I are retired we enjoy traveling.

My favorite swim story is the same as my most amusing story. I have absolutely no kick. Every new coach will give me a kick set without fins. After floundering like a cork in the middle of the pool, the coach relents and lets me use fins. At our club picnic our coach hands out awards and prizes to his swimmers. I received a 12 inch ruler with the comment from my coach "Here is another foot to help your kick".

Three adjectives that best describe me are dedicated, serious, and dependable. Other people would probably tell you that I am helpful, supportive, and dependable.

