

Swim Talk *Spring, 2005*



The Newsletter of Missouri Valley Masters Swimming

MOVY Swims To Spectacular Win in St. Louis Zones

No one said it was going to be easy, but MOVY swimmers captured more points (to win first place) than any other team from Kansas, Missouri or Illinois at the Breadbasket Zones in St. Louis during April. And, they broke their share of records along the way. MOVY had 12 men and 4 women at the zone meet.

All results are listed from the SLAM website at www.swimslam.org and in all, 11 individual records and 7 relay records were set.

With 1st and 1,784 points to SLAM's 1,592, MOVY had several excellent swims. Among records were as follows...

| | | | |
|---------------|--------------|------------|----------------------------|
| Women's 35-39 | Lisa Elsner | 500 Free | 6:03.36 |
| Women's 35-39 | Lisa Elsner | 1000 Free | 12:26.90 |
| Women's 35-39 | Shari Harden | 200 Free | 2:11.65 |
| Women's 75-79 | Nan Bohl | 100 IM | 1:41.96 |
| | | 50 Free | 37.09 |
| | | 100 Free | 1:24.33 |
| | | 200 Breast | 4:00.07 <i>(continued)</i> |



The MOVY Columbia, Missouri Men's 35+ Record Breaking Relay Team - Dale Brown, Barry Holcomb, Mike Duffy, & Doug Hayden

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| | | | |
|--|------------------|------------|---------|
| Men's 75-79 | Fred Hoppe | 100 Breast | 1:39.83 |
| | | 200 Breast | 3:42.66 |
| Men's 40-44 | Rob Dunscombe | 200 IM | 2:06.97 |
| Men's 40-44 | Jeff Hagan | 50 Breast | :29.45 |
| Mixed 25 + 400 Medley Relay | | | 4:25.85 |
| | Shari Harden | | |
| | Anthony Thompson | | |
| | David Bressler | | |
| | Lisa Elsner | | |
| Men's 35 + 200 Free Relay | | | 1:36.87 |
| Men's 35 + 200 Medley Relay | | | 1:49.11 |
| Doug Hayden, Dale Brown, Mike Duffy, Barry Holcomb | | | |
| Men's 35 + 800 Free Relay | | | 7:57.32 |
| Men's 35 + 400 Free Relay | | | 3:33.51 |
| Men's 35 + 400 Medley Relay | | | 4:03.01 |
| Tim Waid, Rob Dunscombe, Brad Miller, Jeff Hagan | | | |

Congratulations to them all!

Greeks, Gods, and Gifts By Landon Kirchner

Watching the Olympics in Greece last summer reminded me of just how important the Greeks, the ancient ones rather than our contemporaries, are to our Western way of thought and to the way we approach sports. In particular I was struck by the number of athletes, especially in track and field, who thanked God for their success during their post-competition interviews. Now that may seem a common and unremarkable practice on the face of it, but it is very Greek in its origin and very *hubric* when you think about it, that is, expressive of excessive pride or self-importance. If God made it possible for them to prevail in the competition, then what does that say about their fellow competitors and their standing with God? Isn't there a measure of arrogance or egotism behind the apparently humble deflection of responsibility for their success to a divine source? Did God not favor the others or find them as worthy of victory?

Of course, this apparent lapse in rationality is not confined to sports. People do the same thing all the time in other circumstances. A survivor of a plane crash thanks God for his or her good fortune, somewhat thoughtlessly ignoring the implication regarding those who perished. It is difficult for those of us not emotionally overwhelmed by a 'miraculous' outcome to not think that God's timing needs some work in such instances. Getting on the case a bit earlier, say *before* the plane crashed, would have saved the lives of many apparently 'good' and 'worthy' people. Or so it might seem to their loved ones.

But of course the practice of placing our fates at the feet of the gods is as old as the Greeks themselves. That venerable text regarding the Trojan War, the *Iliad*, is full of accounts of divine interventions. Homer makes it seem as such a battle between the gods on Olympia as between the Achaeans and the Trojans. Zeus hurls thunderbolts to aide Hector in turning the tide of battle against the Greeks, Apollo sends a plague to punish the Greeks for Agamemnon's refusal to return the daughter of one of his priests to her father. Athena stops Achilles from slaying Agamemnon for taking a slave girl from him. Paris is saved by an Aphrodite-created dust storm as he is about to be slain by Menelaus. And so it goes. To the Ancient Greeks these were all very rational events and not the least miraculous. The world order was one controlled by entities with personalities and conscious purposes, however petty, jealous, vindictive, or unfair. Hector can't defeat Achilles because Achilles is a demi-god, a product of a coupling of a man and a goddess. But Achilles' fate is sealed by the gods and foretold to him by his mother. If he kills Hector, then his own death inevitably follows, ironically due to the very act that made him invulnerable, the heel his mother held him by when she made him invincible. Even the gods can screw things up in the Greek's

worldview.

In a more secular contemporary world this all seems rather fanciful according to modern rationality, and Lance Armstrong's attitude offers an apposite contrast to the divine intervention idea. When asked what he attributed his unprecedented success in the Tour de France to, he said it was simply preparation. He did the work; he expected the reward. *Live strong!* Not surprisingly, he said the same thing about his recovery from cancer (at least until he started doing ads for a pharmaceutical company). He refused to give in to it. It wasn't a miraculous recovery. It was a product of his own personal will.

But how rational really is this modern view of ourselves and the world? Surely the Greek attitude lives on in a multitude of contemporary notions of fate, though stripped of any personality. If not, then why do people play their special numbers in lottery drawings, which are frequently based on personal dates of importance to them like birthdays or anniversaries. Don't they realize that numerous people share those same dates? How many people do you suppose were born on your birthday in America alone? What operant mechanism connects you, your favored numbers, and the ping-pong balls falling out of a cage in a lottery drawing? It is either a complete mystery or it's a great example of the persistent hubris haunting Western Civilization, or both. We want to believe we are special and things are arranged in our favor. I suppose we could call it 'positive paranoia.'

So which is more rational, Gods acting purposefully to shape human affairs or totally inexplicable alleged connections between unrelated events that supposedly settle our fates? The world order of the Greeks at least made coherent sense, given their assumptions. But what sense do these contemporary mysteries make in any sort of universe, other than one populated by egocentric individuals who believe they are favored by forces they can't even identify? The Greeks could at least give their sources of fate names and personalities they could relate to. We have rejected their gods but preserved their notion that there is *something* running our lives other than us.

But we also owe something else to the Greeks that we carry over into the sporting arena, and that is the code of honor that governed the lives of the Greek citizen-warrior. How we win and lose, and how we respond to both is more important than that we won or lost according to the Greeks. Many a fine man died on the plains of Troy, men whom Homer takes great pains to personalize through recitation of their noble genealogies, and all for the recovery of a woman who left her husband for another man. But regardless of the banality of the cause, what matters on an individual level, the level at which morality is most important, is the manner in which the combatants conducted themselves. The noble soul does not perish in vain even in pursuit of misguided causes, but deserves a lasting memorial in poetry for its loyalty, courage, and allegiance to duty, as well as its respect for the opponent. Homer shows us the nobility of Achilles when he relents to king Priam's request for the return of Hector's body so he may give his son a proper burial. Achilles' rage is assuaged by the familial bond between a father and his dead son, and he can therefore see Hector not simply as the hated slayer of Achilles' dearest friend Patroclus, but as another fallen warrior, one worthy of honor and respect.

Michael Phelps, more than any other American who competed in this past Olympics, exhibited the athletic commitment to this Homeric ethos. Through an extraordinary act of generosity toward his main rival, Ian Crocker, he earned a greater honor than winning the eight gold medals he sought would have brought him. By relinquishing his spot on the medley relay to Crocker in the finals, where the Americans were highly favored for the gold, he displayed the very grace that Achilles lacked in the beginning of the *Iliad*. Though he had earned the right to swim the final by beating Crocker in the 100-meter fly, Phelps stepped aside so that Crocker could leave the Olympics with a gold medal. Phelps said he did it because they had come to Athens as a team and were leaving as a team. What was that but an expression of loyalty, friendship, and compassion for one's comrade and competitor; a stunning example on the largest stage in sports of the Homeric code at play? The very notion of sportsmanship in athletics is based on this Greek code of conduct, although it isn't as pervasively practiced today as we might like it to be, as Maurice Greene and Gary Hall Jr. embarrassingly demonstrated at those games in Athens.

Michael Phelps might also serve as an example of how we need to transcend our Greek origins both intellectually and athletically. When he was asked if he was disappointed with his silver medal in the 200-meter freestyle, he said he wasn't at all. He was just pleased to have been able to compete against the finest freestylers in the world. He wouldn't have passed on that opportunity for anything, not even a gold in another event. As Shakespeare put it, "The play is the thing." Now why is that? We are taught in sports that our focus should be on our results; time, place, winning, improving, and so on. We try to establish objective measures of our success, which is why we find judged competitions like gymnastics and diving particularly frustrating. As we say in swimming, "The clock doesn't lie." But Phelps focused on the experience rather than the result, even though he could certainly have celebrated the fact that he swam the fastest 200-free ever by an American. There is a lesson to be learned in that.

The Greeks emphasized reason and rationality over emotions and aesthetics because they believed the cosmos was a rationally ordered whole governed by a *logos* or operating principle that could be fathomed by application of our distinctive capacity for reasoning which sets us apart from other species. Objective measures of performance fit that idea of order and rationality because they remove the subjective aspects of performance. Your swim might have felt good, but look at the time. It stunk. You can't argue with that. But contemporary reflection on our preference for rational criteria has revealed an aesthetic foundation to conceptualizations of rationality itself. In other words, what seems rational to a person or a culture is the product of what feels right

or seems more pleasing or makes matters more satisfying. It's a hard pill to swallow, but reason is essentially the slave of the passions, as David Hume, the 18th Century Scottish philosopher observed.

The point is that at the core of all human experience lies a valuing heart. And so it is with swimming and all sports. Athletic activity and competition feels good to us. There is something physically basic and simple to it that has its own beauty. To train, to race, win or lose, is to silence the rational, controlling monitor inside of us that our linguistic capacity created, and to allow the body its own voice. Now what we need to learn to do is to listen to it, and stop listening to the ancient rationalistic voices within our minds that tell us that victory is the measure of our worthiness to others and to God. When we can feel the joy in the activity, the competition, our competitors, and the race itself, we transcend the Greeks and their oppressing rationality and we gain the only gold the heart truly desires; the experience of something beautiful. And once you learn to do that, you are going to feel an overwhelming desire to thank God for the gift.

Our first book review... Also read by the editor—an incredible and inspiring story...

Lynn Coxe's Swimming to Antarctica Review by Jeane Gruender

For as long as I can remember, any book about Antarctica or Alaska, its explorers, the Ididerod (with intimate insights into the preparation by the mushers and dogs) has been a strong passion of mine.

So when Lynn Coxe's journal, *Swimming to Antarctica*, was published I anxiously read it. This led to the recommendation to all athletic competitive friends to read it. Her sheer drive and determination in her pursuits would be a model and inspiration.

Our Robin and Gretchen were always involved in swimming; age group, masters, even giving swim instructions but that's where they and their team mates resemblance to Lynn stopped.

While Lynn, at age 8 was on a large swim team one day, with teeth chattering, lips blue, the other kids begged the coach to let them out of the practice pool, that is all of them but Lynn. She pleaded to stay in the water, in a cold and driving rain, pelting hail stones but which she later described as "sweet tasting!" She enjoyed every minute of the 2 hours that she swam. As she reflected that experience, she said that it was different and beautiful.

It was at this time remember ,age 8)that she realized that one day, she would swim the English Channel. Actually, when she got home that day from practice, she got out the National Geographic Atlas to try to determine the distance.

It was apparent, as the years went by that she possessed an insatiable desire to do what no one had ever done and under extremely hazardous and beyond-human-realm conditions i.e. swimming in water as low as 32 degrees! And so it was that she swam Catalina and English Channels, Cook Strait, Strait of Magellan, shark infested, around the Cape of Good Hope, Bering Strait plus endless others, all the while keeping a RACE PACE!

Among the factors that enabled her to do this were two characteristics:above average body fat and her buoyancy. But who among us would dare to even attempt the Nile, gladdened with garbage, debris and dead animals?? The dose of motivation you will get from reading this book will sustain you through arduous workouts, competition and in my case even cold water.

Read it....Share it..... Lynn Coxe's *Swimming to Antarctica*

Next Upcoming Meet...Put Old Pike on your Calendar!

Now's your chance to get that all important tune up for Nationals on your calendar

2005 3rd Annual Old Pike Masters Meet

Saturday, June 4, 2004

Where: Park Old Pike Country Club, 5101 Old Pike Road, Kansas City, MO 64118. Phone 816-453-2550. (From downtown Kansas City, take I-29 north to the Vivion Road exit. Go straight through traffic light, past Home Depot. The club is the first right after Home Depot. The pool is six lanes, 25 meters long and heated.

When: Saturday, June 4, 2005, check-in: 4:45 pm, warm-up: 5:00 pm, meet starts: 6:00 pm. The meet will conclude at 9:00 pm.

Questions? Karen Libra, 816-587-5444 (e-mail kmlibra@kc.rr.com)

Metabolism 101 by Sherri Harden

Have you heard that your metabolism slows as you age? Wrong. Have you heard that your metabolism is determined primarily by genetics? Wrong again. Have you watched the TV commercials that give the distinct impression that if you use their product your metabolism will increase and your life will become one long dance in leather pants? That is so wrong on so many levels, but I will stick to the topic of metabolism.

The massive amount of conflicting information about metabolism leaves me with one strong impression...there must be money to be made! And that is the name of the game. People will spend obscene amounts of money on pills that will do little more than make expensive pee. They are literally flushing money down the toilet. Most products that claim to increase metabolism do nothing at all or artificially increase cell metabolism for a short period of time often with adverse side effects (rapid heart rate, increased blood pressure). Some products really do increase metabolism and I read about them on the 'Busted' page of the FDA reports. (After the product is 'Busted' it is promptly destroyed and the company is fined, but the fine is substantially less than the money made so it is still profitable for the company.)

Knowledge is power or at least it can save you some money and help you avoid tachycardia. When people think about metabolism they usually think about their body as a whole, but actually you need to shift your focus to the cellular level. Metabolism changes as each cell becomes more (or less) efficient at breaking down the carbohydrates (sugars), fats and proteins that you ingest in your food. A cell must be able to break down sugars and fats and convert that energy into ATP. ATP is the form of energy cells need to function. Your cells will become more or less efficient at this conversion depending upon the demands you place on them. This is what determines your metabolism.

To increase metabolism, you will need to encourage your cells to build more of the enzymes and mitochondria that drive the conversion of sugars and fats to ATP. This encouragement comes in the form of longer workouts and more vigorous workouts. A cell usually has about 5 seconds worth of ATP readily available, then creatine-phosphate is used for the next 15 seconds. If you continue to exercise beyond 20 seconds, your cells will need to convert sugars or fats to ATP. The sugars will be used more so than fats at the beginning of your workout, but as you continue to exercise beyond 30 minutes, more fats will be utilized and less carbohydrates. This shift towards a higher proportion of fats and less sugars will continue as your workout goes beyond 45 minutes, 60 minutes and so on.

At this point it should be obvious why people who exercise for 30 minutes at a time usually do not see a change in body composition and become discouraged at the lack of results. This also explains what you have been hearing on the news lately about the shift from 30 minute workouts 3 - 5 times per week to 5 hours of workout per week. Of course you should not dramatically increase the duration or intensity of your workouts, but add some time to one workout and increase the intensity of another workout during the week slowly over the course of several weeks. If you already workout 5 hours per week and you still have a Buddha belly, you may need to extend one workout beyond 60 minutes and add some intensity to another. I am assuming that you have a good diet free of tater tots. Your metabolism will crank up in response to the longer workouts within just a few months and you should notice a change in your body composition, or for those people who do not need to lose weight, an increase in food consumption without gaining weight. If you fall into the latter category, be prepared for snide comments from coworkers who will not appreciate your ability eat everything and not gain weight.



Zone (and National Champion) Nan Bohl and her special trainer enjoying a rest between heats at the St. Louis meet.

5k/10K Swim Postal Swim Coming Up

This summer, there's an opportunity for all of us to participate in the 5k/10k postal swim in any 50 meter pool. Over the years, many MOVY swimmers have participated and plan on continuing. Let's get teams together and hit this hard so we can practice for the 2006 swim, next summer, which is being hosted by MOVY.

*Check out all the long distance swims for 2005
[athttp://www.usms.org/longdist/ldnats05/champs05.php](http://www.usms.org/longdist/ldnats05/champs05.php).*

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***Yikes—MOVY SWIMMERS! Send the editor an
article, a tidbit, a recipe,
your favorite swimming story!***

Where to Swim

Want to join in? Give the contact person below a call and show up! People of every level of ability, interest, gender, color, sexual orientation, nation of origin, profession—you get the idea... everyone is welcome.

Blue Springs -- Jeff Mix @ (816) 228-0137
Clay-Platte YMCA -- Chip Glidden @ (816) 587-2354 & Clarke Stokes @ (816) 587-8639
Columbia, MO -- Brian Hoffer @ (573) 882-4669
Johnson County YMCA -- Doug Dimmler @ (913) 642-6800
Kansas City North -- Doug Earnhart @ (816) 741-7963
Kansas City, MO -- Contacts: 816-942-2020
Kansas City Wave -- Derek McCracken @ 816-588-4420
Liberty, MO -- Anna Lea Roof @ (816) 792-8428
Macher Swim School, Columbia -- Joanne Macher @ (573) 875-SWIM
McPherson, KS -- Chip Parker @ (316) 345-8332
Overland Park, KS -- Rob and Nina Kingsbury @ (913) 648-8077
Salina Masters YMCA -- Debbie Coellner @ (913) 825-4605
Kirksville, MO -- Seth Huston @ (660) 785-7219
Lawrence -- Kent McDonald @ (785) 843-4290
Hutchinson, KS -- Bob Fee @ (316) 663-6451
Independence -- Jason Word, Coach @ (816) 796-4809
Jewish Community Center -- Gardner Wright @ (913) 472-2693
Johnson County, KS -- Kris Dees, Kris.Dees@jocogov.org @ (913) 362-7672 x 26
Salina Masters YMCA -- Debbie Coellner @ (913) 825-4605
Springfield, MO -- Al Fisher, Jr @ (417) 886-8590
Drury Masters, Springfield -- Chris Corraggio @ (417) 873-7422