BLUE LOBSTAH NEWS

State of the MESC

By Tim Lecrone

Happy New Year, Blue Lobstahs!

With the New Year comes 365 days of aquatic adventure!

If you haven't signed up for the 2018 season, be sure to do so ASAP. Go to USMS.org and follow the user friendly steps, and poof! you'll be good to go! (http://www.usms.org/content/join_or_renew)

January finds MESC ready for the Second Annual Mount Desert Island Masters Meet on the 28th. The 1650 will be pre-registration only and due to an age group re-scheduling will be held at 9:15am. The rest of the meet will run as scheduled with warm up starting at 10am, and meet entries accepted until 10:15am. The remaining events will start at 11am.

February will be another dose of excitement with the return of the Toughen Up Challenge hosted by the Westbrook Seals at Davan Pool in the Westbrook Community Center. Warm Up starts at 9am with a meet time of 10am.

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"Next Top…no the next one"
– Unknown

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Maine Masters and Swimming Saves Lives – By Robert Ashley

Worldwide there are over 370,000 drowning deaths each year. Half of the world's 7.5 billion people cannot swim. In the United States 37% of adults cannot swim 25 yards. 3,500 Americans die each year of unintentional drowning. Of these more than 70% are adults. In Maine, about 30 people die of drowning each year.

Swimming Saves Lives Foundation is the charitable arm of US Masters Swimming. The Foundation was formed in 2012 to raise public awareness about the problem of adult drowning and to give financial and educational assistance to programs that provide adult learn-to-swim lessons. This year the Foundation will be supporting 52 adult learn-to-swim programs in the US. Nine of these programs are in New England, including two in Maine (one at Penobscot Bay YMCA in Rockport and a new program at the Casco Bay Branch of the YMCA of Southern Maine, in Freeport).

In Maine, about 30 people die of drowning each year

Swimming Saves Lives (Continued on page 8)

State of the MESC

It isn't official as of yet, but it looks like the Maine SCY Championships will be returning to KVY in Augusta on the weekend of March 3rd (TBD). This is a great tune up for those headed to Harvard two weeks later, or it's a nice opportunity to get a shave in if Boston isn't a competitive focus.

Speaking of NE LMSC SCY Championships, Distance Day will be March 10th, with the rest of the meet falling on March 16th through the 18th. Sign-ups will be opening soon (http://www.meetresults.com/2018/nelmscscy/), so let's head down there with 60 swimmers this year! Let's remind all of New England just how great it is to be a Maine Swimmer!

Not that anything can top Harvard, but for those with a desire to do a bit of coaching, there will be Masters Coaching Certifications Courses, an Adult Learn to Swim Instructor Course, and a Stroke Clinic for masters swimmers in Boston over the days of April 14th and 15th. More information coming soon!

Last but by no means least, our winner of the early bird MESC registration raffle is Kay Keating Thomas! She wins a beautiful MESC quilt provided my Blue Lobstah faithful, Anne Uecker! Kay, we'll bring this wonderful prize to you at Harvard where we'll be raffling another for those that would like to buy a ticket!

Happy swims, all, and I hope to see everyone soon!

Yours in swimming,

Tim Lecrone

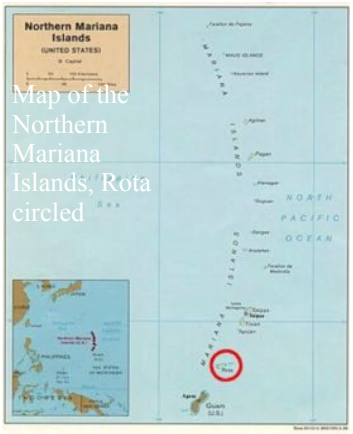
Rota Blue

Contributed by Emily Cook

Home is where the pool is. This is a phrase I've come to embrace lately. So, packing up and heading to an island for a few months without a competition pool was not an exciting prospect. Sometimes you get to swim butterfly, sometimes you must be a frequent flier.

My athlete crosses the finish line, closely trailed by an athlete representing the neighboring island of Saipan.

The island of Rota is part of the United States Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, located just north of the island of Guam, which is a U.S. Territory. Rota is known as "Nature's Treasure Island," and it's emerald green cliffs live up to that name. Underwater, the corals and marine life are healthier than those found on Guam, thanks to a local marine preserve and less commercial and residential fishing pressure.



Map of the Northern Mariana Islands, Rota circled

Though the ocean water hovered around 80 degrees every day, open water training wasn't a safe option me. I hoped to focus on dryland in the island's one gym. To this day, we are searching for the person who has the key to the gym, making the phrase "island time" a bit of an understatement. It didn't take long for my pool withdrawal to start, complete with repetitive dreams of swimming laps, attending meets, and making swimmers use flip-flops in lieu of paddles.

I found temporary solace through Blue Palms Dive Service. Co-owned by a former competitive swimmer, Blue Palms let me tag along on some of their dive trips. SCUBA diving and swim training can complement each other in many ways. In addition to the therapeutic benefits of being underwater, I found new ways to work on coordination and balance during dives. Blue Palms is also a refuge for former Olympic swimmer Fred Schmidt, who currently makes Guam his homeport, er, pool.

Despite Blue Palms, my swim withdrawal persisted. It seems that every tropical island has something named blue…blue hole, blue lagoon, and now, a blue lobster. Rota even has a blue triathlon, with 2017 marking the 23rd annual Rota Blue Triathlon. Fortunately, I met someone who needed help with the swimming portion of their race, and general coaching through their first triathlon.

Practicing new coordination challenges with Blue Palms Dive Service

The Rota Blue Triathlon has two distance options: an Olympic distance (2 km swim, 90 km, and a 21 km run), and a half-marathon distance (1.5 km swim, 40 km bike, and a 10 km run). Both courses cover the majority of the island, with a loop swim course in the East Harbor. During the swim, you might be lucky enough to spot some dolphins or triggerfish swimming below you. The bike course takes you past the island's most popular beaches, dotted with palm and plumeria trees, and painted murals. The running portion features tropical fruit farms, shady vine canopies, and vistas of Rota's iconic topography.

My swimmer happily shows off our island-resilience of using flip-flops as paddles for training (some dreams do come true!).

I was hesitant to take on a client only 2.5 weeks before a race, but we needed each other. Luckily, he had some aquatic experience and was very coachable. After the initial assessment, we moved through technique and safety drills quickly. Coaching on Rota had unique challenges. The West Harbor is the best location for technique work, with multiple docks and calm water. Unfortunately, people are technically not supposed to swim in active ports. We did it anyway. In addition to the boats (which were few), there was the ever-shifting obstacle course of fishermen, and the group of children who became our constant fan club and distraction. Rota has not seen many resident swimmers or swim coaches. In spite of a short timeframe and challenges, I felt good about my athlete's progress and potential. The first words out of my athlete's mouth when he finished the race were, "I'm never doing that again." A snack, a shower, some encouraging words, and 20 minutes later he was already talking about what he will do next year to be better. He finished 1st in his age group and 11th overall, but I think we can expect great things from someone who used a mountain bike without clip-ins, especially if he gives his swim coach more advanced notice!

A wave of Rota Blue Triathlon swimmers enter the East Harbor and prepare to start

A MESC swim cap as a Flat Stanley, overlooking Rota's East Harbor

The majority of athletes who compete in the Rota Blue are from Japan and South Korea. This year, a handful of people from Saipan also participated. My athlete was the only person representing the host island. Tourism on Rota started diminishing in the 1980's, when the Japanese Yen crashed. Recently, tourist numbers have declined again, presumably due to concerns related to North Korea's threats to Japan and Guam.

Home may be where the pool is, but the excitement, hospitality, and opportunities on Rota are not be missed. If you're looking to diversify your triathlons and contribute to a gracious and deserving island economy, get your frequent flier game on and join me on Rota next year for the 24th Rota Blue Triathlon!

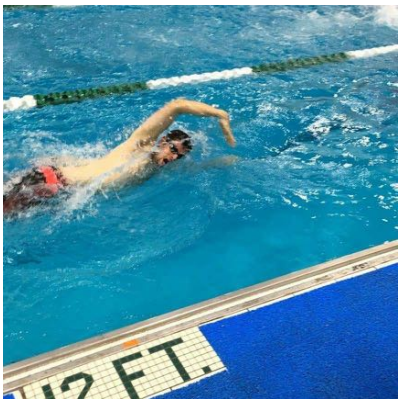
Fire dancers at the Rota Blue Triathlon banquet and awards

Ted Clark - Swimmer Story

Nearly two years ago, I made a decision to change my life. This change was years in the making, but I distinctly remember when the final shift in my mindset took place. I stood listening to my bathroom scale creak and groan under my weight, waiting for it to spit out a number at me that indicated the latest crash diet was working. 365 pounds. Darn. I stepped off the scale and asked myself "How had I, a former collegiate swimmer, let myself get to this point?" I also thought back to a couple of weeks prior, when I was guiding an interventional cardiologist on a bird hunting trip. During the time I spent with him, he told me that there are a lot of horrible ways to die, but obesity-related illness is one of the worst. I promised myself that I was going to find a way to get back into shape.

Leading up to my bathroom scale epiphany I had tried quite a few crash diets that led me to limited short term success, quickly falling back into my old ways, gaining back all my weight (plus a little extra for my troubles). As a culture, we seem to be so predisposed to want immediate change that we get fed up with diets and exercise when we don't see success overnight. We tend to search for the latest fad diet, pill, or surgery that will help us fill our need for immediate results. My experiences had taught me that making dramatic life changes, such as a crash diet, was rarely successful and if I wanted change I would need to seek out other options.

Having lost over 140 pounds, I was successful in making those much needed changes stick. So what did I do differently this time? The key to my success can be attributed to a couple of simple changes that I was able to help take root and become habit, eventually growing into bigger, more substantial changes that led me to where I am today. Below I list a couple of the changes that I found to be the most effective.



- **Eliminate the end goal.** I think it's easy to say, "I'd like to lose 20 pounds." the trouble with this mindset is, what happens when you hit your goal? The first thing I would do is head over to the Chinese buffet and have a celebration dinner! Rather than setting a weight, focus on objectives like: living a healthier lifestyle, feeling better physically, and clothes fitting better. This will reduce the likelihood of slipping back into your old ways when you hit that goal weight.
- **Increase activity level, gradually.** In all likelihood, if you're reading this article you are already fairly active, so it's not worth dwelling on this point. When I made my initial decision to get healthy, my activity level was non-existent. I started by joining one of those corporate gyms and getting on a cardio machine for 15 minutes a day, 3-5 days a week. For me, having the pressure of an audience and paying the monthly membership fee was enough to influence me to stick with it. Gradually I began adding elements that made real change like: weight lifting, personal training, and swimming.

- **Pick one or two unhealthy foods or diet practices and try to eliminate them.** Diets are tough because they generally require enormous lifestyle changes that are not maintainable for long periods of time. Small changes don't typically don't require as much effort to maintain and will gradually lead to more changes over time. For example, my first changes were to eliminate drinking alcohol during the week and stop eating at McDonalds. Over time, as these changes become habit, I began to make more changes.

- **Immerse yourself in the lifestyle.** This was the key for me, and is what I fall back on to this day when I am having a hard time sticking to my goals. There are a lot of ways to do this, but some of the most helpful tools for me were podcasts focused on health and fitness, group training sessions, and friends with similar interests. The podcasts I prefer include: Breaking Muscle, Barbell Shrugged, and Ben Greenfield Fitness. The group sessions included joining Tim Lecrone in Waterville for daily swims and joining a men's weightlifting class at a private gym in Augusta.
- **Finally, cut yourself some slack.** This is not easy and it is not a fast process. It's important to give yourself a break if you have a bad day, week, or even month. Sometimes just recognizing that you made a bad decision is a win. The key is, if you fall off the wagon, dust yourself off and climb back on.

As I sit here writing this article, I stand 6'5" weighing in at 220 pounds. My resting heart rate has dropped from 85 bpm two years ago to an average of 47 bpm. My blood pressure is excellent for my age. And, while I had been knocking on the door of diabetes two years ago, my blood sugar is now completely healthy. Most mornings during the week I meet the 5:30am masters swimming group that varies in size from 2 people up to 8 or 9. The workouts vary from anaerobic to aerobic and generally average around 3000 yards. I also lift weights 3 days a week with a class at my gym in Augusta, Gevolution Fitness. Each session focuses on different muscle groups, is closely coached, and has been a critical component of my success. Lastly, when I finally reached a weight that I was comfortable with I knew that I was a tipping point where many people fall back into their old habits, in order to combat this I started working with a nutritionist from Precision Nutrition to help me remain accountable for my choices and provide me guidance for fueling my activities.

Like most things in life, when it comes to health and fitness, one size does not fit all and your journey will be different and unique from mine. While my journey was incredibly challenging and, at times, frustrating, I have not once regretted committing to it due to the joy and energy it has brought back into my life. Hopefully this article has provided you with some ideas that you could use to begin, or continue, your own journey. Please don't hesitate to reach out to me on Facebook (Ted Clark) and Instagram (clarkted) to follow my journey and share any thoughts or questions that you have. See you in the pool!

Don't Panic - By Simon Wignall

DON'T PANIC
Deal with fear in the open water early and often.

This past December I was swimming in the Abacos Bahamas with Swimvacation. Our afternoon plan was to circumnavigate this pretty little Island called Bonefish Cay (pronounced Key) . It featured a shallow protected side of turtle grass in light blue water and a deep blue Atlantic side with reef life. The water was particularly choppy that day, unprecedented really for this area.

A local woman, Angie, came out on her paddle board and greeted us. She said "its a big ocean, and you know what time it is? " It was dusk, when sharks are more actively hunting. She followed that up helpfully with "we've seen them". Cue scary music. She meant it kindly but she did succeed in putting "shark" in my head without saying the word. That is the worst place for a shark. I don't fear sharks I can see; I respect them, but they don't fill me with dread. They are ambush predators, so I dread shadows that could be a shark.

After she left our group I began to see shadows everywhere. It was the beginning of fear. Fear is manageable when it is just starting; before it snowballs into a full blown panic attack. Most open water swimmers I know have something they fear or dread in the water. Something that causes them to potentially panic. They run the gamut from boats to waves, the cold, or low visibility. Panic will not only ruin a swim but it is potentially dangerous. It can lead to dangerous decisions, It can sap your strength and effect your breathing and heart rate.

Other swimmers in the water are invaluable because they can talk to you and break fear's grip on your mind. I did check in with the other swimmers to try and gauge how they were handling the unprecedented bumpy water. They seemed fine, so was I.
Other strategies for reducing fear include, taking a deep breath, focusing attention on something else, envisioning goal or the end of the swim, and swim in groups.

If alone, I swim head up granny breaststroke or shut my eyes while underwater, eliminating my trigger entirely. I can't see the shadows therefore I can't be afraid of them.
This strategy works for me, but it is the early recognition of fear and panic that is the take away lesson. For example, I was climbing a firetower recently and I started to panic from my fear of heights. I recognized the fear immediately and started to try and find something to calm me. Looking up at the next platform did the trick, but it was the early recognition that made the trick work.

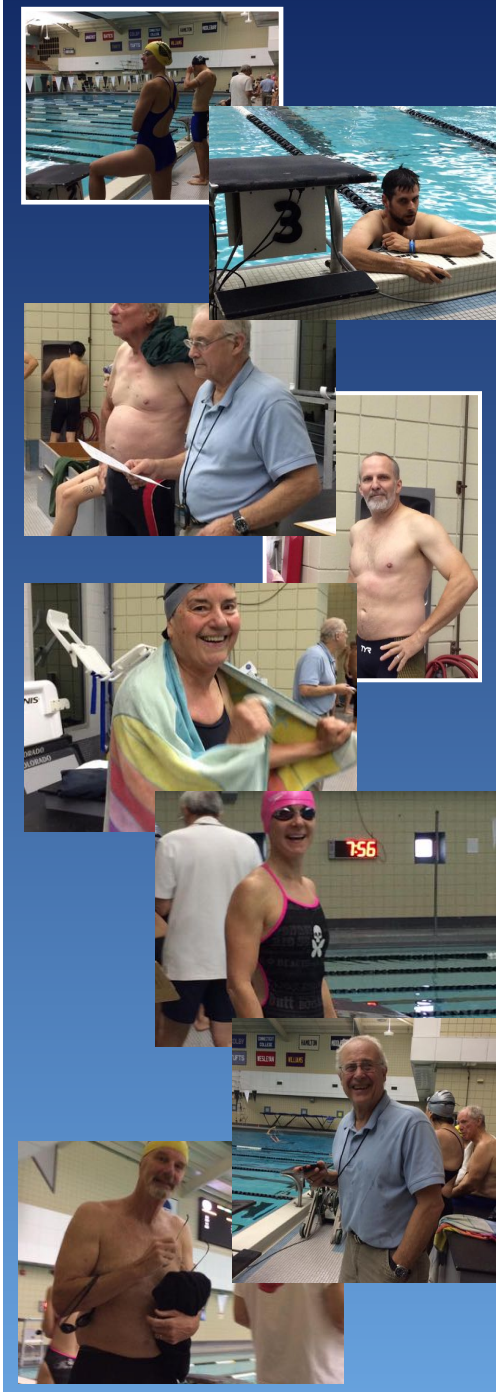
Back at that tropical island in the Bahamas we called the swim before we rounded the corner to the Atlantic. Not because of sharks, I had not mentioned my conversation, but because the water was very rough in what should have been a protected bay. Knowing that the Atlantic rollers were only going to add to these existing waves made the swim too unpredictable so the group decided to swim back to the catamaran and have drinks and dinner instead. I focused on that goal, shut my eyes underwater and swam some head up breaststroke. I never panicked and I loved that swim.

Learn to Swim from Page 2 (Continued)

The educational mission of Swimming Saves Lives Foundation includes an adult learn-to-swim instructor certification course, which is taught around the country. I took the course, along with 30 other masters swimmers from across New England, on September 30th at the Westbrook Community Center in Westbrook, Maine. The instructor was Bill Meier, lead ALTS instructor and level 4 USMS certified coach. Bill is the Aquatics Director and swim team coach at Bard College at Simon's Rock in Great Barrington, Massachusetts and the coach of Pace/Makers Masters swim team. He created New England's "April is Adult Learn-to-Swim Month" campaign which has been adopted nationally. He was the recipient of the US Masters Swimming Dorothy Donnelly Service Award in 2014. Bill is an incredibly energetic and enthusiastic teacher. After a few very motivating stories about the enormous positive impact learning how to swim made in the lives of some of the adults he has taught to swim, Bill taught us many techniques and tips to use to help adults learn to swim. After an entertaining and educational classroom session, we moved to the pool where we practiced our skills.

With our certificates in hand, we left feeling excited about putting our lessons to work. Three of us newly certified instructors are ready to help launch the Casco Bay ALTS program this coming April. We will be joined by Mike Hurd, who has previously been certified. We will be looking for US Masters volunteer instructors from the area, who do not have to be certified ALTS instructors. This will be a great opportunity to share our passion for swimming and help save lives.

FACES IN THE WATER



Meet Photos - Courtesy of Anne Uecker

Highlights of One of Our Masters - by Sandy Potholm

In this issue, we are Highlighting Houghton (Hody) White of Brunswick, Maine

I learned to swim in the ocean doing the Breaststroke, and I liked doing it underwater, where I felt released from the surface tension and could get a full arm stroke. You can't swim the Crawl or Backstroke underwater, and I never learned how.

I swam for Brunswick High School, Hebron Academy and Bowdoin College, always swimming the Breastroke. At Bowdoin in a meet against Amherst in 1957, I swam against Bill Jones in the 200 yard Breastroke. We swam most of the race underwater, which was legal back then (I once swam 95 yards underwater). The winning time was 2:33, not good by today's standards, but good enough for the college record. My time now is 3:56. Age takes a toll.

After college I served in the infantry as a First Lieutenant at Ft. Benning, Georgia. Then I went to medical school and after that I practiced Pediatrics in my hometown of Brunswick. For many years I competed in squash and running while Bill kept on swimming, setting many records in the Masters age groups. This year he is attempting to compete in all 53 swimming events. The last I heard, he had finished fifty of them!

A few years ago, he came to me recalling our old rivalry. He encouraged me to join the Maine Masters. This year we both turned 80 (our birthdays are six days apart) and being at the bottom of the Masters age group (80-84), it seemed like the right time to join. Also, my knees were giving me trouble.

My first meet took place in Belfast, 60 years after Bill and I swam at Bowdoin. After an emotional reunion, it was déjà vu all over again. We both swam faster than the state and New England record in the 100, and I swam faster than the record in the 50. Since then we have been in three more meets, and I have yet to lose a Breastroke race. Of course, Bill and I are the only 80 year olds competing in Maine!

I hope to continue with Masters swimming for many years. It keeps me fit and I meet new friends in the swimming community. My next meet will be in Exeter in January.

Wicked Hot Coaching Job Listing!

Head Coach
Coastal Maine Aquatics
Cape Elizabeth, Maine

Coastal Maine Aquatics (CMA) is seeking passionate and enthusiastic applicants who love the sport of swimming for a full-time salaried Head Coach.

Long-standing club. CMA is a USA Swim Club founded in 1991, and is part of Maine Swimming LSC. CMA is a 501c3 non-profit organization overseen by a Board of Directors. We have a staff of 4 assistant coaches. With more than 90 swimmers throughout the year, ages 5 thru 18, CMA offers programs at 7 different training levels. CMA consistently places among the top teams at Maine Championships.

Commitment to excellence. CMA has many of the top swimmers in the state, with one Junior National qualifier and five Sectional qualifiers currently. CMA has achieved Level 2 Club status. Our team operates year-round out of two indoor 6-lane pools one in Cape Elizabeth (SCY) and one in South Portland (SCM), which are located within 5 miles of each other. We host three meets per year at our SCY pool. Our swimmers are students at the areas top high schools and many go on to swim at the collegiate level. Only one hour away, Colby College is poised to complete a new state of the art 50-meter natatorium by 2020 for use by all levels of Maine swimming competition. CMA has a dedicated, involved and supportive membership base with great potential for future growth.

Outstanding quality of life. Coastal southern Maine is known for its unparalleled quality of life, pristine beaches, spectacular ocean views, lighthouses, farms and low stress lifestyle. The area is ranked among the most livable regions nationwide, offering an excellent quality of life, access to high quality healthcare, nationally ranked schools and outstanding outdoor recreation opportunities. Portland, Maine's largest city and just a 10 minute drive, continues to accumulate national "best of" awards, including America's Best Town in the East by Outside Magazine, a top ten Greenest City by Organic Magazine and America's Foodiest Small Town by Bon Appetit.

Qualifications/Attributes:
- 5+ years experience as a Head Coach or Assistant Coach of a USA Swimming affiliated club;
- ASCA Level 3 certification or above strongly preferred;
- Experience leading and mentoring assistant coaching staff;
- Proven success coaching, motivating and inspiring swimmers at all levels;
- Bachelor's Degree preferred.

CMA offers a competitive compensation package and is an equal opportunity employer. **To apply contact: cmaheadcoach@gmail.com.** Application review will begin in January 2018.

Wicked Shahp Blue Lobstah Branded Stuff

Blue Lobtah T Shirts – Only $10 bucks! Wow!!

Email Tim Lecrone to place your order before they are gone forever!

Tlecrone@msn.com

Letters to the Editor

Hello Maine Masters Swimmers,

I hope you enjoyed Issue #4 of the Maine Masters Swimming Newsletter, which is emailed (and posted to Facebook) quarterly to members.

Please email or Facebook message me any ideas you'd like to see, photos, stories, or articles you'd like to write about. I'll do my best to include your ideas in future publications.

Hope to see you all at New England's at Harvard in March!

Happy Swimming!

Mike Hurd

mike@mastersswimmer.com

Editor – Blue Lobtah News

To effectively communicate, we must realize that we are all different in the way we perceive the world and use this understanding as a guide to our communication with others. – Tony Robbins

Upcoming Meets

January

January 28th
MDI Masters Meet
Entry Form and Information

February

Febuary 4
Philips Exeter Mini Meet
Exeter NH
Info here

Westbrook Seals Toughen Up Challenge
Entry Form and Information

March

March 10th
NE-LMSC SCY Champs - Distance Day
Blodget Pool
Harvard University, Boston Mass
Meet Website

March 16th to 18th
NE-LMSC SCY Champs
Blodget Pool
Harvard University, Boston Mass
Meet Website

April

April 14th
Coaches Certifiation Classes, Level 1,2,3
Boston Mass

April 15th
Clinic Class for Coaches, Stroke Clinic , and ALTS
Boston Mass