BLUE LOBSTAH NEWS

OPEN WATER SEASON IS ALMOST HERE!

Seven reasons to swim open water this summer

Are you thinking of signing up for an open water race this summer? Here are seven reasons you should!

1. It's fun!
2. You know you want to!
3. Gives you motivation to train!
4. The camaraderie!
5. No chlorine!
6. It will impress your family & friends!
7. It's a great way to make new friends and connect with old ones!
8. No flip turns!

Table of Contents

1. State of the MESC – Tim Lecrone

2. Swimming Saves Lives – Mike Hurd

3. Impact of Swimming – Doug Pride

4. Favorite Healthy Recipe – Katrine Alcaide

6. Training for Open Water Swimming – Ben Morse

8. Coaches Corner – Kirsten Read

10. Maine Masters Logo'd equipment

11. Harvard Recap

"I think goals should never be easy, they should force you to work, even if they are uncomfortable at the time."

~ Michael Phelps

State of the MESC Address – by Tim Lecrone

Greetings and salutations, Lobstahs!

2017 looked to be an awesome winter season, and it didn't disappoint.

We started things off with a beautiful meet in scenic Bar Harbor at the MDI YMCA at the end of January. To say that the hosts were welcoming would be a HUGE understatement! It was fun filled and friendly complete with lots of new participants and raucous noisemakers! It was one of the biggest spectator crowds that I've ever seen at a Maine "Mini-Meet."

Continued on Page 2

ALTS and Swimming Saves Lives – By Mike Hurd

Edited and reprinted NEM News, Feb 2015

I first learned about the US Masters Adult Learn to Swim program in April of 2014. I watched a news clip that had gone viral, which told the story of Fox 32 Chicago News Reporter Darlene Hill. After years of being afraid of water, she was finally able to conquer her fears and learn to swim through the US Masters Swimming Saves Lives program last year. It was a very inspirational story.

Swimming has been an important part of my life and helped me become the person I am today. I take it for granted that I know how to swim. It's second nature to me. So when I saw this story, I was compelled to learn more.

Fast forward to December, 2014 at the New England LCM Championships at Boston University. I walked by a table set up in the lobby and met Bill Meier, who was spreading the word about the Adult Learn to Swim Certification program. He told me more about the US Masters Adult Learn to Swim program and that there was a new class to teach people how to become certified instructors. I wasn't sure how exactly I was going to use the certification, but I knew I wanted to attend the class.

On January 17, I drove the 250 miles to Bard College and attended one of the country's first U.S. Masters Adult Learn to Swim (ALTS) Certification courses. It was a wonderful experience. It was a day long course, which included classroom instruction and in-the-pool role playing, as well as a short swim test.

Continued on Page 7

State of the MESC Address (Continued from page 1)

In February the ever stalwart Toughen Up Challenge came to town! This was the first year that this meet had been held at the John P Davan Pool in Westbrook, and it didn't disappoint. The meet was incredibly well run with the Westbrook Seals club team hosting, and the competition was excellent! After five well swum races apiece, the distance champs were crowned as Jenny deHart and Fred Schlicher, while the sprints were championed by Jess Beers and Matthew "Todd" Whitford.

The big showdown for the end of the winter months came in the ever anticipated form of the 2017 New England LMSC SCY Championships at Harvard. We had exceptional representation at both distance day and the following weekend with the remaining two zillion events. With 56 competitors signed up, we had 48 that were able to make it for the fun and festivities. We may not have won it all on paper, but the smiles, cheers, and crazy aqua enthusiasm were undeniable. In the end we managed to hold off both Great Bay Masters of New Hampshire and the hard charging Bearcat Masters from New York to achieve a third place finish behind the home team Charles River Masters and second place SwimRI. I guarantee that no other team on deck had as much fun as the mighty Blue Lobstahs!

This spring finds us in the process of scheduling the traditional Dan Horton Invitational at Waldo County YMCA in Belfast. We're also looking for a June meet. If anyone is interested in hosting, please, reach out to me at tlecrone@msn.com!

Thanks so much for an incredible winter, and let's get hyped up for the spring/summer! Do I hear any takers for Dover in July? I'm setting the goal for at least 30 MESC faithful!

The Impact of Swimming – By Doug Pride:

It would be easy to focus on the physical health benefits that swimming offers as swimming is a low impact, full-body exercise that anyone of any age can enjoy. And while I don't want to minimize this point, swimming is much more than that for me. Benefits and life lessons learned through swimming transcend the pool.

Among the most important benefits of swimming have been the friendships and relationships that have been formed through our sport. The shared experiences of our training and our competing form bonds that are the basis of lasting friendships. Just before I sat down to write this reflection, I was in the pool with a dozen or so swimmers with whom I train; three were men that I have known for over 40 years. We met each other at Pine Tree Swim Club in the early 1970s. I am also still in contact with many other former age group, high school, and college teammates. Many former competitors have always been ~ and continue to be ~ important people of my life. Establishing meaningful relationships through swimming fortunately has continued into masters swimming. Some of my best friends are masters swimmers.

At a young age, I was taught by older teammates and coaches the importance of setting goals and working hard to achieve these goals. This has been a double-edged sword as, while I have reaped the rewards of this hard work at times, I certainly have fallen short of my goals as well. It has been through our sport that I have learned how to accept disappointments and to learn from the experience. It is in large part due to swimming that I am willing to set goals and take the risks without knowing what the outcomes will be.

I would be remiss if I did not talk about simply enjoying the many aspects of swimming. I enjoy being in the water, whether it is training in the pool or swimming in the ocean on a hot day with my lovely wife, Becky. I have always been a spectator of our sport. While many may question my sanity, I enjoy watching swimming at all levels. As a masters swimmer, I am inspired to watch others of all walks of life and of varying abilities compete. This has been especially true with my father who picked up competitive swimming in his retirement years. Additionally, I have been a student of the sport for as long as I can remember. I find satisfaction in learning about improved techniques and training methods and, not only trying out those techniques myself but also sharing them with others through coaching.

The biggest impact swimming has had on me was ironically when I lost the privilege of swimming for my college team. After going through some struggles with drinking in college, I became ineligible to compete. I decided to reach out for help and that help changed my life. Besides my immediate family, it was my swimming friends who were most supportive. Through this help and continued support, my relationships with family and friends improved, and it was only after making positive changes in my life that I met my wife. It was soon thereafter that masters swimming became an integral part of my life.

It is hard to imagine my life without swimming. We are truly blessed to be part of such a wonderful sport and, as masters swimmers, part of an excellent organization.

A Favorite Recipe: by Katrine Alcaide

I never appreciated curry until I made this recipe. Enjoy the meal over rice and I don't think you will be at all disappointed!

Coconut Chicken Curry With Turmeric And Lemongrass

care of Bon Appetit

Ingredients: 4 SERVINGS

2 lemongrass stalks

1 large shallot, chopped

4 garlic cloves

1 2-inch piece ginger, peeled (don't worry about it), thinly sliced

1 teaspoon crushed red pepper flakes

1 teaspoon ground turmeric

1 tablespoon vegetable oil

4 chicken breasts chopped into 2x2" pieces

Kosher salt, freshly ground pepper

4 kaffir lime leaves (optional) – grate lime rind 1 tsp if you don't have leaves

1 3-inch cinnamon stick

4 cardamom pods (ground up)

2 star anise pods (ground up)

1 15-ounce can unsweetened lite coconut milk

¼ cup unsweetened shredded coconut

Chopped cilantro and chives (for serving)

Continued on Page 5

(Continued from Page 4)

Preparation

Remove tough outer layers from lemongrass. Finely grate bottom third of 1 stalk and set aside; discard the rest of the stalk. Trim and discard top third of remaining stalk, then bruise stalk by giving it a few whacks against a cutting board (this helps release the essential oils). Tie it in a loose knot; set aside.

Pulse reserved grated lemongrass with shallot, garlic, ginger, red pepper flakes, turmeric, and 2 Tbsp. water in a food processor, adding a splash or two of water if needed, until a paste forms.

Heat oil in a large skillet over medium. Season chicken with salt and pepper and cook 8–10 minutes. Transfer to a plate.

Cook spice paste in same skillet, stirring, until very fragrant, about 5 minutes (it will begin to darken slightly as the water evaporates and the paste begins to fry in the fat left behind).

Add kaffir lime leaves (if using), cinnamon, cardamom, star anise, coconut milk, coconut sugar, and reserved knotted lemongrass to skillet.

Bring to a simmer, add chicken, and cook, turning pieces occasionally and scraping bottom of skillet often, until chicken is falling-apart tender and coconut milk has broken (the fat will separate from the liquid and start to brown the chicken and other aromatics), about 45-60 minutes depending on size of chicken pieces.

Arrange chicken on a platter and spoon any braising liquid over.
Top with cilantro, chives, and toasted coconut if desired.

Enjoy!!

Training for Open Water Swimming By Ben Morse

While switching from pool swimming to open water swimming may seem to some swimmers like switching from basketball to baseball some simple adjustments are all that is needed to prepare for a successful swim. Here are some helpful tips.

Wetsuit. If you are wearing a wetsuit in your race you will need to do several swims wearing the wetsuit to see how it moves with your particular stroke and body position. It also helps to swim in water of similar temperature to the race you will be swimming so you will know if you can expect to be cold or if you are at risk of overheating in the suit. These swims will also help you get used to the different buoyancy you will have in the wetsuit.

Another key in wetsuit swimming is lubrication. Use plenty of non-petroleum based lubricant, mainly on your upper trunk area. Trust me your skin will thank you. Silicone based lubricants are quite effective and will not harm your wetsuit.

Sighting is another thing that people spend a lot of time thinking about. Your open water training should include work with picking your head up and sighting on an easily visible landmark. What is probably more important is working on swimming straight. Your stroke might have a defect that steers you off course that you may never notice in the pool but becomes problematic in open water.

Being comfortable in the open water is important. Remaining present and not getting into a panicked state is important for being able to establish and maintain a comfortable pace almost as much as doing the right amount of training.

Speaking of training, training in the pool for open water is just as effective as doing open water swims. Longer distance repeats at aerobic pace, although boring at times, are very effective preparation. Don't forget to keep doing your speed and anaerobic work (tight interval swimming). Speed work is always important for any race distance.

Most of all, have fun. You are outdoors and swimming, such a short season in Maine that every minute should be enjoyed!

Learn to Swim from Page 2 (Continued)

Masters Coach and ALTS Instructor Bill Meier led the training. His enthusiasm is contagious. It is evident that teaching adults how to swim is a passion of his. There were 50 students in attendance from all over the Northeast with diverse swim-related backgrounds. There were many swimming instructors and swimming coaches. There were also quite a few people like myself who were passionate about learning the correct way to teach adults how to swim.

We spent approximately 4 hours in the classroom, learning a broad range of topics including: who should become an instructor, a history of the program, how to organize your own ALTS program, and how to teach adults how to swim. I had never taught adults how to swim, so much of the information was new to me. For example, I did not know that 37% of American adults cannot swim the length of a pool. I also didn't know that on average, 10 people die by drowning each day (most are adults). I also would not have realized there are several different types of "non swimmers" and that they each require a little different teaching approach.

The class instruction was very informative with great content. I left the instructional part of the course feeling confident I had the knowledge and tools to teach adults how to swim. We even received a laminated progression chart to use while teaching in the water.

After the in-class instruction, we broke for lunch. And then we all suited up for role-play. We teamed up in groups of three people. Then we took turns using our new skills to "teach" our team members how to swim. One person was the student, one was the instructor, and one was an observer. This was very valuable because I was able to immediately implement techniques I learned in the classroom.

Lastly, we had to demonstrate that we were Competent swimmers, as per the American Red cross Water Competency. To show our competency, we had to swim 25 yards, jump into water over our head, float or tread water for one minute, swim in a full circle and find an exit, and exit the water without a ladder.

I was really impressed with the US Masters Adult Learn to Swim Instructor Certification Course. Bill Meier did a great job teaching useful content in a manner that helped me really learn. I am now a US Masters Adult Learn to Swim Certified Instructor and am working on creating a program in my local area to help teach adults how to swim. I am grateful for the course having been created and look forward to helping to change lives.

A USMS ALTS Instructor training class is scheduled in Maine on September 30 in Portland. Check usms.org for more details.

FACES IN THE WATER

Coaches Corner – By Kirsten Read

COME TO YOUR SENSES

…and spring forward this swim season

If you're like me, you may find it difficult to maintain the same intensity of focus in your swimming season after season. It can be especially difficult to reload after training for a specific goal. Recently I have been exploring the role that our senses play in swimming. Just taking notice of small connections between mind and body can lead to adjustments -- and small changes can translate to big gains in the long run, not just in technique but in renewed motivation.

Senses are defined as any of the faculties by which the mind receives information about the external world or about the state of the body. In addition to the five traditional faculties of sight, hearing, touch, taste, and smell, the term includes the means by which bodily position (proprioception), balance (equilibrioception), and pain (nociception) are perceived.

The word sense comes from the Latin sēnsus, meaning sensation, feeling, understanding. Because our sport must be performed while balancing in water with our faces submerged, one could easily argue that the interplay of stimuli is more complex than that of land sports. How many other sports require relearning how to breathe?

Here are a few suggestions to get you thinking about how many stimuli bombard us during a swim:

Sight. Environment forces us to use our senses differently in the pool as opposed to open water. In the pool we subconsciously use the lane line, black line, wall to keep moving in a straight line. Conversely, in the open water we have no such frames of reference and must use a buoy or assigned object to help us assess our direction, hone our sighting skills, and make stroke adjustments to keep towards a goal. Try closing your eyes in the pool or the open water (avoiding collisions of course) and swim towards a predetermined object -- this may reveal stroke flaws that you have been compensating for.

Hearing. When I am swimming well, I sometimes notice a different sound of the water whooshing by my ears. I often ask my swimmers to notice sound differences as they descend a set. On another note, I am surprised by how many of my students don't use mental music to aid their rhythm and tempo. If this isn't something that comes naturally to you, you might think about repeating mantras or trying a tempo trainer.

Touch. We often describe "feeling" the water -- a finesse-type motion that is crucial to setting up for a powerful pull. It is hard to articulate this concept to someone who has never achieved it -- it's more of a tension or a pressure than merely a touch. Besides sculling, I rely on a variety of fist drills to focus on the importance of the hand and forearm connection to the water.

Pressure. Swimmers not only use touch receptors but, even more, pressure receptors if they want to achieve more power. However, if the angle of the pull is flawed, they unknowingly may be wasting energy pushing water down or to the side instead of behind. I recommend having a coach videotape and analyze your stroke. Most don't realize that they are pulling with a straight arm, pushing down instead of back, breaking their wrist, and dropping their elbows, just to name a few of the major offenders. Visual cues for body awareness (proprioception) are key to achieving effective technique.

Balance: Try placing a pull buoy between the ankles. On the next swim, place it between the knees. Next time, use it between the thighs. Repeat. By shifting the balance point the body learns to make the adjustments needed to stabilize the core and maintain equilibrium.

Whether you take a moment to look at your stroke real-time (I like the eyes-up catch drill), in a video, or in your mind's eye -- being more self-aware is an excellent first step toward self-correction. If technique isn't your thing, there are many other exciting options to pique your sense of derring-do. Many of our friends and teammates are attempting grueling marathon swims and frigid ice swims (think: nociception!). I participated in the inaugural Casco Bay SwimRun last summer, which forced me to run for the first time and consequently opened up a whole host of intriguing parallels and contrasts with swim training. It's never too late to take a fresh look at an old puzzle.

Happy Spring!

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

Harvard Recap – by Blue Lobstah

The several hundred Maine Masters' swimmers rarely see each other. We swim separately, from Machias to Hudson Florida. Just like the tens of thousands of master swimmers in other states, fewer than half of us ever compete. Our main convergence is every March, when those who do compete get together at the Harvard New England championships.

This year 56 of us signed up for Harvard; 48 made it. And what a glorious show we put on. There were Maine wins in every one of the 18 individual events by 14 different Mainers. And that's not counting Erica Smrcina's 2nds in the 50 and 100 fly in which she broke the New England record but narrowly lost. Or 3 more 2nds by less than a second.

Jessica Beers won 5 of her 7 races, setting NE records in 2 of them. Doug Pride concentrated on 3 races and won them all. Ex-President Anne Uecker got three golds, Erica Smrcina & Nate Stevens 2 each, and Bill Jones outlived his serious competition and got 13. Single gold-medal winners were Tsveta Stanilova, Katrine Alcaide, Robert Kysela, Jenny deHart, Joe Fulmer, Alan Switzer, Kevin Kostin & Louis Kronfeld.

Of the 36 New England championships, 13 were New England records: Alcaide's 50 free, Beers's 100 IM & 50 fly, Smrcina's 50 and 100 fly, Stevens's 50 breast, Jenny deHart's 200 breast, and Jones's 3 flys & 3 IMs.

So how did we lose to tiny Rhode Island? In the past, when fully mobilized, we've even beaten the home team, which had 100 swimmers this year. And Rhode Island, which united in the past to beat us, splintered again as South County pulled out. Swim RI had about as many competitors as we did, but theirs swam more events & relays. We are hampered by distance. Only 9 of us, 5 from PenBay Y, made the long extra trip for distance day. And a lot of us couldn't get there because we coach or have kids in championships. Or because we work! Lots of us were limited to a day or two. Pieter deHart had to leave early to fly off to work in the Amazon jungle. And we had more than our share of medical problems. These took a toll on our relays, usually our strength. Under the circumstances, we still mounted 15 relays, 3 of them won & 6 were 2nd, but less than our usual strength.

So our heroes are not so much the record-breakers and champions as the team players who dog through a lot of events and may have to give up some individual glory for a relay. Doug Roth & Jones slogged through13 events; Roth didn't do relays, but he had a competitive age group. So did Susan Rardin (11 events & our female high scorer), Scott Redmon (11), Ellen O'Donnell (10), Ben Morse (9) & Brendan Trainor (9), each of whom also swam relays. And special mention goes to Bill Rupert, who swam 7 individuals and a relay despite serious illness, and Tish Noyes, who swam 7 events & just missed a medal 5 times with 4ths.

Letters to the Editor

Oh my gosh!
What a super newsletter.
Loved the substance.
Loved the interesting articles.
Good advice from the coaches corner.
Frank and honest.
Well done Mike.
Thanks for taking this on.
It really is a great addition to our Masters program.
~ Sandy Potholm

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 Meet Schedule

Visit www.mainemasters.org

To access all upcoming meets, important meet information, and signup forms.

Please keep the letters/pictures/emails/feedback coming!

Thanks! Mike Hurd