# United States Masters Swimming <br>  

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## All In The Family <br> by Terry Laughlin

Since departing the ranks of age group coaching two years ago (after a 15 -year hitch), I've kept in
 touch with the sport by writing this column and by getting back into training and competition myself as a masters swimmer. Though I swam in college, and spent my age group coaching career hanging around various pools, I didn't take advantage of my access. So after a 16 -year hiatus, I returned to active swimming last year and discovered that I can train and compete with a renewed appreciation for the joys of a challenging but satisfying workout or a well-swum race.
These experiences have also made clear to me how much age group swimmers can benefit from exposure to masters swimmers, and how much age group parents can benefit from the perspectives gained by training and competing themselves in masters swimming. I'm convinced that one of the best possible situations for young swimmers is to be blessed with parents who are masters swim-mers-sort of the total swimming family.
These experiences brought to mind a conversation I had several years ago with Coach John Flanagan of the Alexandria YMCA in Virginia. Flanagan coaches some incredibly fast oldsters on the D.C. Masters, swims faster himself at 42 than he did at Syracuse University more than 20 years ago, and as an age group coach has developed such elite competitors as Michele Griglione, a many-time national champion in the individual medley. Flanagan once told me that one of his age group parents had greatly improved her outlook on her child's swimming after joining his masters program. How might that occur? There are many ways in which age group parents can benefit from experiencing our great sport from an inside perspective.

First and most obviously, there are the therapeutic effects on body, mind and soul of an organized program of training and competition in
a sport that doctors heartily recommend for adult wellness and fitness. Far less obvious are the ways in which it can enhance your relationship with your child and your sensitivity to the demands (and rewards) of training and competing in swimming.
An important and seldom-considered dividend is in allowing your child to see you as a role model for lifetime health and fitness. A child who sees his parent enjoying masters swimming will be less likely to see swimming as a finite youth activity, and more likely to see it as the first step in a lifetime continuum that is the best health insurance of all. I can vouch for this from personal experience. My 14 -year-old daughter, who divides her time between swimming, field hockey and lacrosse, has already told me that she can't wait until she's 25 , so that she can swim in an adjoining lane to me in a master's meet.
Participating in even a moderate exercise program will give you a far better understanding of the rigors and challenges of swim workouts. You'll be less likely to chide your child over "not working hard enough" or "not trying" once you've experienced a little lactate accumulation or oxygen debt yourself.

Swimming in a masters meet will help you experience competition in a new way. You'll see how much satisfaction can be gained simply from giving your best effort, demonstrating new proficiency, or improving on previous best times, and how little it matters, in those moments, whom you beat . . . or failed to beat.
Both you and your child will enjoy turning the tables and letting your child cheer you on at a meetor tease you "for dying in that 200 free."
At the short course masters nationals last May in Mission Bay, I spoke with Leslie Osborne, a $35-$ year-old swimmer and mother of three age group swimmers (Josh, 11, Leslie, 9, and Brian, 6, who swim with the Michigan Stingrays). At Mission Bay, Leslie, also a member
of the Michigan Stingrays, shattered the 35-39 age group national record in the 100 yard breaststroke with a 1:07.58 (seven seconds faster than her best time as a teen-ager!) in only her second year of masters swimming after an 18 -year layoff. Her insights lend weight to the benefits I've cited above.
"I never considered myself to be a high-pressure swim parent, but I find I'm more patient and relaxed about my kids' swimming now because I'm not living vicariously through them," she said. "I'm able to go after my own goals rather than pushing them to accomplish things because of some unfulfilled wish of my own."
She added that training and racing have given her a renewed understanding of the difficulties and frustrations her kids may experience. "I see quite a few parents who expect their kids to drop their times at every meet they enter, and masters swimming teaches you that you can't always do that even if you'd like to," she said.
Leslie's advice to other parents is to avoid acting negatively with their kids after a race. "Sometimes I see parents who are so fat and out of shape that they couldn't even swim a 25 , scolding their kids about losing a race, and I want to ask them how they'd like to try it," she says.
'They should realize all the feelings of anxiety and putting pressure on yourself that swimming races can impose. They should know it's not such a great feeling when things don't work out. The other side, when things go well, is the great satisfaction that you have of knowing that you've done your best, that your work and conditioning have paid off, that your training was successful regardless of whether you win or lose."

For those who've never swum before, there's no reason to be discouraged or intimidated. Masters swimming is truly an all-comer's sport. Many people who never took their first strokes until middle age have gone on to satisfying and successful careers as masters swimmers. Your child's coach can probably tell you how to get involved, so go ahead and take the plunge.

CEREBRAL WORKOUT 101

Oh-boy! Oh-boy! The local college swim coach asked me to conduct a workout next week. I agreed as long as I had complete dictatorial freedom. I love exposing new swimmers to one of my "CEREBRAL HORKOUTS". It's early season therefore technique training is important, and it's only an hour workout. How perfect!

College swimmers are flexible and open minded, so it will be fun to see if they can cope with one of my most favorite high concentration workouts.

LOOK AT DAVE

As a background rule throughout the workout, the swimmers must only look at Dave's side of the pool when they breathe on their sides (ie freestyle). Dave is the lifeguard and he always sits on one side of the pool. Depending upon which direction they are going, the swimmers will have to breathe on both sides of their body.

Warmup : 400 yards at least 50 yards of each stroke Remember to "Look at Dave" (L.A.D)

Pre main: $5 \times 50 \mathrm{Kick} / \mathrm{swim}$ a $1: 15$ descend L.A.D. $4 \times 50 \mathrm{Kick} / \mathrm{swim}$ 2 1:30 descend non-free

The warmup is not enough to get swimmers "hot" for the main series. A pre-main series which is timed, with leg emphasis should warmup the whole body. The first length is kicking, done without a board, as follows:
freestyle: kick on your side, one arm extended in front backstroke: on back, both arms extended, hands touching breastroke: on stomach, both arms extended, hands touch butterfly: dolfin kick on side, one arm at side

Main Series: do appropriate series, answer questions:
Sprinters: Pseudo 100's (s/b near current 100 yd time) $5 \times 751$ arm swims $1: 45$ (first is left) count strokes/length, time, alternate arms repeat for 3 sets, last set a 2:00

Distance: Pseudo 200's (s/b near current 200 yd time) $5 \times 150 \quad 1$ arm swims a 3:00 (first is left) count strokes/length, time, alternate arms repeat again, last set a 3:15

Questions: Which side is more efficient? Left or Right? (Least strokes per length)
Which side is faster timewise? Why? Between sets, ask the swimmers around you how they are doing? Get to know them. Was your last set faster? What's your end of season goal time?

I expect most swimmers when they first do the above series will fail badly. It's asking alot to count your strokes, get your precise time plus cope with the coordination of one arm swimming. Good kickers, in good shape, experienced in this series should equal or exceed their best times. If a swimmer is seriously slower than expected he is encouraged to do flip turns, kick harder, be more streamline and do anything (short of pulling with the resting arm which should always be stretched out in front) to get their time down. Don't get discouraged. This is the kind of workout that will take months and years to perfect. You'll never be too proficient.

I do a similar workout at least every 2 weeks. My strokes/length are exact and my times are of ten within .2 seconds between my left \& right sides. But I do have problems at longer distances and off strokes. Butterfly and breastroke should also be done with only 1 arm. The touches and pullouts must always be done with the unused arm always remaining stretched out.

It's great fun to have competitions with yourself between your left and right sides. Add to this, the desire to exceed your best time at the 100 or 200 mark and you hardly need a coach to pressure you. The coach exists to provide a question and occasionally help the swimmer with an answer.

Many teams swim 2500 to 3000 yard per hour workouts. "Dr Sprint CEREBRAL" workouts often progress at a 1000 to 2000 yards per hour rate. This lower rate allows more swimmer/self, swimmer/swimmer, and swimmer/coach communications and yields better quality swimming with much more thinking.

Reprinted from Aqua-Master - the Oregon Newsletter. Thanks, Robert Smith!

Reprinted from NEM NEWS - J.K. Edwards,

## FREESTYLE~~~~

Tom Lyndon
SOME NEW YEAR RESOLVES... Now I'm not one for saddling myself with a slew of vows just because a "new" year has begun- again. But I can't resist offer ing a list of arguably laudable swimming goals for 1990 in hopes of encouraging my swimming friends to strive for and succeed more in this new year. Make a commitment that weighs what you consider good for you against what feels good without any particular effort. In this way, you may strike an endur ing balance between what you are capable of and what you could reasonably expect of yourself over time if unfettered with resolves.

* Really streamline your hands and arms with your head as you push off the wall. I tried it this noon (New Year's Day) and was reminded that it does make a big difference. It takes some discipline not to just relax on the pushoff. I tried it while swimming fast, which is the best way to feel the difference. The faster you are going, the more the drag of an unstreamlined body is apparent. Car ads talk about the coefficient of something, meaning the car's body has been zerodynamically shaped to slip through the air: you can do the same for your dear old body. The water feels nice sliding past your hands and arms rather than swirling around them. And don't neglect the position of your hands when you take your first stroke at pushoff speed, which is the fastest-presumably-you will be moving each length.
* Make your hands work for you from the moment you put them in the water until you finally slip them out. This means you will slide them in smoothly, "catch the water" ( develop pressure against the inside of your hand) firmly and well beyond your head, then sustain or even build this pressure continuously past your chest, stomach, hips, and upper thighs. Don't stop the pressure until your hand is straight out at your side (not for breaststrokers). Include your forearms in this feeling. You will do this better if you don't extend your hand and arm too far down and don't pull in a straight line. In other words, it's good to do some sculling with bent elbows.
* Do at least one set of interval swimming in each workout instead of settling on the usual yards or lengths packaged in one or a few unrelenting/unimagintive/dull chunks. Any set will do for a starter. My current favorite is this pyramid set.
- $2 \times 50$ yards, starting the second fifty one minute after starting the first fifty.
- $2 \times 100$ yards, starting the first hundred one minute after starting the second 50 and starting the second hundred two minutes after starting the first 100
- $1 \times 200$ yards, starting two minutes after starting

Editor - thanks Jim!
the second 100 .
-2 2100 yards, starting the first 100 four minutes after starting the 200 and starting the second 100 two minutes after starting the first 100 .
-2 250 yards starting the first 50 two minutes after starting the second 100 and staring the second fifty one minute after starting the first 50.

My wife, whom I have been luring into the ways of sweaty swimming, has started doing a variation of this set by swimming $2 \times 25,2 \times 50,1 \times 100,2 \times 50$, and $2 \times 25$ with what seems to be quite ample rest between each swim. Considering that this is the first set she has done on a sustained basis to break away from her almost endless loop of untimed batches of laps, I feel I have opened the door to better swims more than a crack for her. What's more she says she likes doing the pyramid and has improved her time in the 50 back since starting this new regimen.

* Commit yourself to a specific number of swims each week. I recommend at least three, with four or five perhaps optimum. You should feel a bit guilty when you don't get in the weekly number of swims you have agreed to, but not so guilty that you feel you must make up the missed swims the next week. Stay with this number of swims most of the year. You won't burn out at this rate and will have plenty of time to do other things.
* Support your local swim club. If you haven't been to a meet lately, go to one soon. If you are one of the many who get up tight at the thought of racing, try some events that you haven't swum for a while or ever. Sure, your performance will be less awesome. Good! I have some particularly dubious- some might even say noteworthy in a lighthearted and friendly way- accomplishments in some events. I don't brood over these shortcomings and almost smile when I step up on the block to do battle in my losing causes. I kiddingly try to intimidate the older men and women on the adjoining blocks and give these races "a good shot" once the gun goes off. These races are almost zero emotional pressure for me.

If you are one of the many who think they aren't "fast enough", and, therefore, feel inferior, ponder the fact that at practically every meet even your best friend or whatever doesn't usually learn or remember your times in your races, nor do you usually know his or her's. Our times frequently have beauty or lack thereof primarily in the eye of the beholder, who is you.

The Szep cartoon in the Boston Globe shows the classic couch potato looking at the headline of the latest study touting significant health gains from even modest exercise while he is sprawled in front of the TV, saying to his inquiring wife, "Yeah, I'll have another beer ...but I'll get up...and get it myself."

1/90

PICTURES BY DICK STEADMAN - Top L-R: Doris Steadman, Mike Stromberg, Nancy Steadman Martin, Ed Bartsch. Bottom L-R: Gus Langer (85) and Dorothy Donnelly, Marian McKechnie (85) and Julie Dolce (80).


## They top world times at UND

## By Scott Winter

## Herald Staff Writer

There's no feeling like knowing you're in your prime. Even when you're over 80 years old.

Julia Dolce, 80, gave up swimming in 1928 to raise a family And Marian McKechnie, who turns 85 today. took a 50 -year break from distance swimming.
Now they're back, and they're breaking records.

Dolce and McKechnie each shattered the U.S. and World Masters records in their first events Thursday at the U.S. Masters National Long Course Swimming

Championships being held this weekend at UND. Dolce's time of 19 minutes, 56.61 seconds in the 800 meter freestyle beat the world mark by nearly 20 seconds for the 80-84 age group.
"It feels wonderful. Wonderful. Wonderful. Wonderful," said Dolce, who lives in New Midford, N.J. "We all look forward to getting better. I feel very proud of myself.

McKechnie's record was in the 1.500 -meter freestyle, where she broke the U.S. Masters $85-89$ division record by nearly five minutes Her time of $52: 23.80$ also eclipsed the world record. Not only
that, but it was also McKechnie's fourth age-group record. And she's done it all after having two hipreplacement surgeries.
"That was what I set out to do today," said McKechnie, who is in her ninth year of swimming for the St. Petersburg, Fla., Masters team. "I'm very glad to get that record at this stage of the game."
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## DRVIG USE IN SWIMMING

EY DAVID F. TEMPEST, M.D.

Ever since Rick DeMont lost his Olympic Gold medal in the 1972 Munich Games for inadvertant use of an asthma medicine, the issue of drugs in swimming has taken on a new interest. The recent disqualification of a 1988 Olympic swimmer (3 event winner and American record holder Angel Myers?) reminds us the problem is still here.

Now, Masters swimmers are a pretty mellow bunch. Inspite of this we all run into questions about the use and effects of drugs in competitive swimming: not only the use of (illicit) drugs to enhance performance but also the use of medications we need for our legitimate medical problems.

According to the International Olympic Committee ( 10 C ), "Doping is the administration to, or the use by, a competing athlete of any substance foreign to the body or any physiological substance taken in abnormal quantity or by an abnormal route of entry into the body, with the sole intention of increasing in an artificial and unfair manner his performance in competition."

Drugs used to help performance in swimming include four major categories: anabolic steroids, stimulants, nonsteroidal anti-inflamtories and recreational drugs. The first two categories are banned or regulated by the IOC. The later two are not. Anabolic steroids are hormones, either natural or synthetic, used by athletes involved in events of strength or power in order to build up lean muscle mass. They do not increase the aerobic power swimmers need. While often abused by the young athlete blinded by competitive pressure and convinced of his/her immortality, masters swimmers are usually only too cognizant of the body's frailty. Risks of elevated cholesterol, premature atherosclerosis, impotence, liver disease and baldness coupled with the lack of benefit in swimming performance would suggest a real failure of rationality of any masters swimmer partaking of this class of drug.
Stimulant drugs include illegal (amphetamine--except for rare legitimate prescription--and cocaine) as well as legal ccaffeine, many. asthma medicines and decongestants) drugs. Amphetamines may have some effect to increase endurance though most of their effect is felt related to their "revving-up" the psychological state: fostering a. feeling of energy, vigor,
alertness. They have also clearly been associated with several deaths, even in Olympic caliber athletes (indeed, even in the Olympics). More commonly they cause longer term problems of withdrawal depression and may become psychologically addicting not to mention precipitation attacks of heart rhythm disturbance, cardiac pain (angina pectoris), seizures and stroke. Cocaine has effects similar to amphetamines only more so. We've all been well exposed to the risks of use of this dangerous drug. Who needs it? Recreational drugs for the purpose of this discussion include alcohol and marijuana. The majority of us probably partake of alcohol socially and wisely, though in a group our size there are undoubtedly those with abuse/misuse problems. Our fitness in no way protects us from the consequences of this misuse (ask Olympic caliber diver Bruce Kimbal after his tragic car accident). Its use by some marathon runners as a carbohydrate and electrolyte source has raised the question of potential usefulness in competition lasting long enough to deplete those substances inone of our standard masters swim races are long enough for this). The clear deterioration in coordination and concentration associated with it's use would preclude its use before or during competitive events. Marijuana has the same drawbacks on performance without any of its theoritical advantages. The $10 C$ deesn't even bother to ban these two.

Although the $10 C$ can measure levels of nearly all baned drugs on its list it has been unable to effectivly monitor for "blood doping": i.e., donating blood to one's self. Red blood cells stored frozen are transfused back to the donor after his/her body has compensated for the withdrawn cells. This gives a marked increase in RBC mass around the time of competition. Research suggests this may be effective in increasing aerobic power and endurance. No deleterious effects have been seen in elite athletes but that's no guarentee for the rest of us in whom theoretical "sludging" of the thickened blood is a concern. Although not a drug, transfused blood is a clear violation of "doping" as defined earlier.

Masters swimmers are health seeking people. They tend to have better perspective on the value of training and competition to their quality of life than those for whom athletics is an all-consuming vocation. One hopes drug abuse for performance or otherwise will not taint our sport. If abuse is present one hopes the individual and those aware of the problem will utilize the effective treatment programs available.

# Older swimmers not like fish out of water when it comes to sex 



## Sports medicine

## Gordon Slovut

Swimmers may slow down in the water as they age, but they don't seem to slow down at all in bed as the years pass, according to a study of competitive swimmers aged 40 through 80 .

The study indicates that regular vigorous physical activity might prolong the sexual primes of men and women for decades. Phillip Whitten, associate professor of behavioral sciences at Bentley College, Waltham, Mass., said his survey of 160 well-conditioned competitive swimmers shows:

- "Men and women (in their 40s and 60 s) in excellent physical condition haye sex lives much more like those of people in their late 20 s or early 30s than those of their contemporaries."
- ${ }^{\text {E }}$ "There seems to be almost no decline (among swimmers) in either sexual interest or activity ... when (competitive swimmers) in their 60 s and older are compared with those in their 40s."

Whitten asked competitive swimmers how many times a month they have intercourse. The results:

Men in their 60 s reported averaging seven times a month, close to the 7.4 times a month reported by male swimmers in their 40 s .

- Female swimmers in their 60 s reported averaging 6.3 times a month, a bit under the 6.7 times a month reported by female swimmers in their

40s.
He said women were slightly less active than men because most were maried to men older and probably less fit than themselves. The men, conversely, usually had younger wives.

Of the sexually active swimmers, 100 percent of those in their 40 s and 60 s said they had sex at least once a week. (Three percent in their 40 s and less than 10 percent in their 60 s were inactive sexually, in all cases but one because of loss of partner.)

For comparison purposes, Whitten cites two studies of sexual activity in the general population. One showed that 63 percent of women and 73 percent of men, regardless of age, reported engaging in sex once a week. The other showed 47 percent of women over 40 engage in sex once a week.

Not only do competitive swimmers engage in sex more often than other people their age, they also enjoy it more, Whitten said. Ninety percent of his female masters swimmers and 100 percent of his male masters swimmers said they get "high enjoyment" from sex.

In the general population, 65 percent of women and 86 percent of men say they get a high level of enjoyment from sex, according to another study cited by Whitten.

Athletes have been known to exaggerate their sexual prowess. What are the chances the swimmers were telling the truth? "Good," said Whitten, a Harvard Ph.D. with a background in anthropology and sociology. "We used anonymous questionnaires."

His swimmers may engage in sex more often than the average American, but they don't think about it more often. "Contrary to popular opinion, most people retain an interest in sex well into old age," he said.

Whitten, 44 , holder of the 50 -meter backstroke world record for his age group, was trying to find out if there
is a relationship between vigorous physical conditioning and sexual interest and activity. The answer, obviously, seems to be yes. Does that mean that vigorous physical activity is an aphrodisiac? "Our study wasn't designed to determine that." Whitten said. "But wouldn't that make a great headline?"

He said the swimmers were proud of their bodies and felt much younger than their years. It's possible the youthful feeling, which is psychological, is responsible for the increased levels of sexual activity, he said.

It's also possible, he said, that vigorous physical activity increases the production of sex hormones, providing a biological cause for increased sexual activity.

Other studies have shown that men who exercise have increased levels of the male hormone testosterone in their blood, he said.

But even in exercise there can be too much of a good thing. "Anyone who engages in extremely vigorous sports loses sex drive," Whitten said. "We found an indication of a decline in sexual activity among people who trained most vigorously-people who swam $2^{1 / 2}$ to 3 hours a day, five or six days a week," he said. "Those people are not out there doing the equivalent of jogging. They are doing heavy interval training (very fast swimming) without much rest."

What can we take home from his study?
"If you are physically fit - whether you're 40 , 60 , or even 80 - you're likely to maintain an active and rewarding sex life," Whitten said.

Whitten was assisted in the study by Elizabeth J. Whiteside, a former Bentley student. He was to present his findings Saturday at the 30th annual convention of the Society for the Scientific Study of Sex in Atlanta.

## SWIW-MASTER

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BACKSTROKE RECOMMENDATION OFFERED - The Technical Swimming Committee of FINA, the international governing body of swimming, has recommended to the Bureau that the 10 meter limit for underwater dolphin kick on the backstroke be extended to 25 meters off of the start and turns. The Bureau will usually approve the recommendations given by the TSC; however, this item will not be reviewed until January of 1991, when the Bureau meets in Perth, Australia; at the World Championships. Until then, the 10 -meter rule will hold.....

MUNICH + TWENTY $=$ BARCELONA? - In 1992, Mark Spitz will be forty-two. Will he swim in the Barcelona Olympics? When he was twenty-two at the 1972 Munich Olympics, he set the world 100 meter butterfly record of 54.27 . That record stood far longer than any other world record. No question he was in a class by himself then. But he's not there now and lots of others are. Thirty-four of them have splashed past his record. Spitz is sighting on times far faster than those of our fastest masters. Our world record in the 40-44 age group is 1:02.05, set in 1980 by another former Olympian, Lance Larson. At the 15th FINA Bureau meeting held in Melbourne, AUS on Nov. 8-10, 1989 the Bureau determined that, 50 long as he follows the provisions of GR 1 in the future, Mark Spitz is eligible to compete in FINA competitions. Most conventional wisdam won't bet on Spitz..

## Travel - 1990 World Championships - Brazil

USMS has appointed three official travel agencies to provide air, ground, and tour packages for the 3rd FINA/MSI Masters World Championships to be held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil from August 6-13, 1990. Interested USMS swimmers are encouraged to contact these travel agents. Be aware that prices may vary according to the point of departure, the quality of accomodations, and types of additional services.

* VIP Supertravel, 146 East Southmore, P.O. Box 1557, Pasadena, TX 77501. (800) 397-5861 or (713) 473-3312.
* Ponte Vedra Travel, 2280 South Third Street, Pablo Plaza, Jacksonville Beach, FL 32250. (800) 833-SWIM or (904) 241-3271.
* Away To Travel, 7314 NE Fremont, Portland, OR 97213. (800) 638-5723 or (503) 281-1234.

For meet information, contact the USMS National Office, 2 Peter Avenue, Rutland, MA 01543. Meet information will be distributed when it is received from Brazil.

## Alligator given new home

The Indiănapolis Nows
A 3-foot-long alligator, freed from tce at Eagie Creek reservoir, has found a home in Anderion.

Marilyn Bertelson, one of the rescuers of the reptlie, said today Larry Ashba, an amateur naturalist, had taken the alligator, nicknamed "Icebreaker;" off her hands.
"When it warmed up, it got dangerous," Mrs. Bertelson said. "It was hissing and snapping. We have a heart for animals, but this was a little too much."

Mrs. Bertelson said she called animal experts trying to place the gator, including the Indianapolis 200, all of whom declined. "No one wanted to handle it."

Ashba called her about the alligator after
reading news reports of its recovery "and he seemed very knowledgable," she noted. "I met him halfway between Anderson and Indiaizpolis."

She explained many places she contacted sald they were reluctant to talse the reptile because of its unknown medical condition and background.

The alligator was found Saturday near Eagle Creek Reservoir dam by children who saw its snout. It was rewived the next day after the Bertelsons broke the ice and puiled tt free.

Ashba took the gator to his residence Monday, which also is inhabited by two dogs, a monkey, skunk, pigeons, fish and tortoises.

He reported the gator was eating well and adapting to its new environment - a bathtub.

## DALE NEUBURGER

 writes:
## Seems the swim-

 mers weren't the only "animals" in Eagle Creek at the Pan Pacifics!June Krauser, Editor

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