

Meet the GTD swimmer Lynn Foley (65-69 age group)

Check out Lynn's story, and especially take a good look at those pictures! How great is it to be able to say one has been swimming for about half a century!!

Before I splashed into the swimming scene, I was an elementary school guidance counselor, wife and mother of three. I had threatened to join a Masters program for years, but never seemed to find the time. Three years ago I did and it changed my life.



1958: Lynn (on the left) with a summer league trophy

I learned to swim when I was three. My family lived on the largest lake in New Jersey (Lake Hopatcong) and summer was my favorite time of the year. I got up in the morning and put on my bathing suit and took it off at night when I got ready for bed. We had a large dock and all our friends who didn't live on the water visited to keep cool by playing "king of the tube" and other water games. When I was about ten I realized that I was a pretty good swimmer. My best friend's father was the director of a camp for underprivileged children from New York City and I was visiting the camp for "Blue and Gold Day". The campers

were divided into teams and participated in various athletic events. I won all the swimming events and was the hero of our team (although we lost to the Gold). It didn't matter to me that the other campers didn't have the same opportunity to swim as I. Finally I found a sport I was good at! At a teenager I swam on a summer league.

I met my husband at a swim meet in 1960. He was 19 and I was 16. Later we became a military family and for thirty years moved all over the United States and Europe. If there was a pool, we joined and I would swim my laps during "adult swim", which was 15 minutes every now and then to get the kids out of the water to rest.

In 2006 I finally showed up at our local community pool and joined the Anne Arundel Amphibians Masters. After a few months the coach suggested I join several of the team members at the Maryland Senior Olympics. It took some

coaxing to get me there, but once again I realized I was a decent swimmer. Although I didn't make qualifying times, I did earn medals, which allowed me to participate in the 2007 National Senior Games in Louisville. I was hooked! My husband and I go to Florida in winter, so I went on the Internet and found Lake Lytal Masters who I train with in the winter. I compete in league meets in



Lynn (on the left) in Bonaire, 2008

both states. I have also participated in one mile open water swims in the ocean and in December I did a 3K in Bonaire. I swim five times a week for 90 minutes covering roughly 3,500 yards each swim.

“The first photo was taken in 1958 and the second in 2008--fifty years of swimming! I'm older now than my grandmother was when the 1958 photo was taken, but then, as Dara Torres says: age is just a number.”

When I found GTD last year, I knew that setting a goal would help me get to practice. I tend to be compulsive about meeting goals. This year I hope to swim 365.25 miles and I am on target so far. Two of my Maryland swimming buddies joined me for a workout group and we encourage each other at practice or via e-mail.

Swimming has changed my life. I feel better physically and mentally. I dropped twenty pounds. I've made new friends. I've traveled. I keep looking for ways to improve my swimming. Currently I'm working with a personal trainer to increase my strength.

My most recent accomplishment was participating at The Swimming Hall of Fame in the Y Nationals where I bettered five of my six times. I'm now training for the 2009 National Senior Games in Palo Alto where I hope to do even better. Life is good!

Meet the GTD Swimmer Valerie Anderson (50-54 age group)

Valerie has had some incredible benefits from swimming for herself as well as for the rest of her family – she swims with her kids!!



Cruising through the checkout line at the grocery store it came to me: if my life was splashed on the tabloids some of the headlines would read: "Middle Aged Woman Drops 40-some Pounds and 8 Pant Sizes While on 'Water' Diet", or "Homeschool Mom of Six Drowns Stress in Local Pool", or "Woman Obsessed With Swimming Drives Children Husband Crazy" or "Husband Discovers Secret to Having Happy Sexy Wife."

That's me... a 52 year-old knitting woman, married now for almost 30 years to a great guy and I have home schooled our six children, one with special needs, now ages 13, 14, 17, 20, 23, 25 for the past 20 years...so, life is very busy for me. My three eldest are out of the house, (except for their stuff); two are in college and my only son is in the military on his way to Iraq. I often think of him and pray for him while swimming.

The three youngest and I are on the local swim team, the Woodburn Barracudas in Woodburn, Oregon. They compete throughout the year and I am a "Stroke and Turn" Official at their meets. I would compete at their meets if not for officiating.

Once we learned to swim my two younger brothers and I frequented the pool just down the street from our house. I began competing there when my brothers and I joined Willamalane Swim Club in Springfield, Oregon around 1967 when I was 10 years old. I was never very fast and I remember only getting a blue ribbon in a non-relay event only a couple times, and that was when I was 10. I have always been the nervous type and had a hard time sleeping the night before meets. I cringe to think of it now, but in the morning before meets Mom would fix us a heavy breakfast of steak, eggs and pancakes. At the time we thought eating lots of protein would make us swim faster. I



like to think this is one reason why I never did very well. I quit swimming competitively as a sophomore in High School in order to try other sports.

After marrying and having children I found little time for sports but occasionally could get away to the pool for lap swimming. I taught my own children to swim and when my second to the youngest asked to join the swim team at the age of 12, I decided it was time to get back into the water too. Also, my fourth child's rheumatologist recommended she swim to improve and maintain the range of motion in her joints. So the four of us, some willing and some not, jumped into swimming with both feet.

After a year on the team swimming alongside my girls I joined US Masters Swimming and took part in a one-hour postal event and competed in a Masters meet in a nearby town. I was really nervous at the meet and the asthma I had developed while swimming affected my performance. My starts were terrible and my turns were worse but I ended up getting 3 first places and one 2nd place. I was so thrilled to have those 3 blue ribbons I nearly cried. (Never mind there were only 1 or 2 competitors in my age group.)

I enjoy the challenge of "Go The Distance"; my goal is to average a mile per day for 2009. Most days I try to swim at least 2500 to 3000 yards or more and if I keep my current pace I will exceed my goal. In practice I try to do whatever the coach tells us to, which is what the kids are doing, but sometimes my age (or is it the asthma ?) gets the best of me. There are about 9 other masters swimmers on the team, one who is 29 and regularly swims with the senior kids, but most attend practice sporadically.

When I started swimming regularly a little over 2 years ago, I began to shed weight slowly even though this was not my primary goal. I started out swimming 3 days per week for only half an hour at a time and gradually worked my way up to swimming 5 days per week for 1½ hour. I was careful with my diet and over time I lost 40 some pounds and 8 pant sizes. I really started shaping up when the coach started pushing me harder and harder and got me doing "dryland" exercises with the kids on the swim team. Now, when friends ask my husband how I did it he jokingly tells them "She's on a water diet...she swims."

My husband loves having me swim for several reasons. The top reasons: 1. I am happy. 2. I look buff and sexy to him. 3. I am healthy and getting a great cardiovascular workout. 4. I have more energy. 5. I handle life better. My husband is willing to cook supper most nights in order to facilitate my swimming every weekday afternoon. Wow! What a guy!

I love swimming for all the same reasons plus a few more. I've made some wonderful new friends. And I really love the sport in all its various arenas. I love the feeling of cruising through the water particularly while doing backstroke; it feels almost like flying. I am hoping my girls will always stay involved, but even if they drop it I know I will continue to swim. I love working on technique and trying to improve my times. I have some secret unspoken goals, one of which is to be able to swim 200 butterfly and the 400 IM in competition and I want to swim the 50 yard freestyle in 30 seconds or less. The asthma symptoms continue to play havoc with my breathing and are holding me

back some so I may switch to an outdoor pool (rare in this part of the world) to see if that makes a difference. I may even try open water swimming some day.

Michael Phelps, Jason Lezak, and Dara Torres are awesome swimmers but it is the 80 and 90 year olds competing in US Masters Swimming that inspire me most. Someday, when I am 80 years old I want to be the one inspiring the younger swimmers, those 50 and 60 year olds and most of all, my own future grandkids.

Meet the GTD swimmer Bob Esposito (45-49 age group)

Bob is the swimmer in the center with the red hat. Here is a VERY busy man, who loves to swim in the ocean. By the way: this picture was taken in January (brrrr).



I retired as a NYC Detective and now work for the Brooklyn District Attorney; I have 5 kids 6, 9, 11, 13, 14. I am the Breezy Point Polar Bear Club President, "Breezy Bruins".

All my children are Polar Bear Cubs! I have coached swimming for

the CYO STORM swim team for 8 years. I am a Water Safety Instructor and a lifeguard & EMT. I teach swimming lessons at Bally's and the YMCA.

This is the end of pool season for me. At any opportunity I get, I swim a mile in the Atlantic 'till October by myself or with two friends.

I coach soccer, baseball and play softball. Reality that there is way too much going on in my life is becoming too obvious. (Thanks for the wake up call!)

I swam as a kid since 5 in CYO competition and in the Ocean and Jamaica Bay. I slip in a workout whenever there is time, 2 or 3 times a week. I would have liked to have retired and just teach swimming full time but for economic reasons I do both.

Free Style in open water is my favorite, chlorine gives me a headache. GTD is my way of maintaining a goal for health reasons and self-competition.

My hobbies have everything to do with activity; in my younger days: triathlons and rugby, and today hiking up mountains and swimming in the ocean with my kids is everything.

Through our Polar Bear Club we run benefits and participate in other events for a good cause.

Meet the GTD swimmer Nancy Crossman (55-59 age group)

Nancy's story is another great example of how the camaraderie of other masters' swimmers makes life so much more fun.

Swimming, for me, is social, good exercise, and good competition, probably in that order. I started lap swimming in my 50s when running began to hurt, and after a hip replacement joined a masters group. The timing was right, as I had recently retired from Verizon as an Engineer and could now take care of me. How could I have known that this diverse group of adults of all ages would soon become an integral part of my life? The



first day I swam with the group, I was invited to an annual party. It was then I knew this was really going to work out well!

The support from my group was amazing as they talked me into my first master's competition at Harvard a mere two months from my first swim! I had never been off a starting block before, but liked diving, so off I went. Since I earned points for my team, it really made me proud of my contributions.

Most likely I will never be at the top of my age group (55-59), so I focus on small personal goals and try to do new events each year. For someone who never did a fly event until they were 56, the 200IM can be daunting. So, that

is my next goal. There. It's in print. Now, I'll have to do it! I absolutely love competing. One of my favorite parts is the rush of going off the blocks, but the best is when I touch at the finish!!! Forget the medals and ribbons, - I really think we all swim for a burger and a beer after a meet. My longest distance was in the one-hour swim where I tallied 3265 yards – not bad for a rookie. I have done a 1650, but not a 500 yet. Go figure. For two years I brought the kids to a one-mile open water swim where they blew by me at the start, and had already eaten lunch when I finished. Well, maybe it wasn't that bad! My preference is pool swims where I can see the bottom. The unknown yucky stuff in open water creeps me out, so it is quite a feat to venture out.

My family consists of my husband, two children (13 and 15) who swim, a



17-year-old Chihuahua and a one-year-old kitty. I really think the kids and I share an understanding of the ups and downs of competitive swimming. They have been to my meets to cheer me on, understand my excitement, and are genuinely proud of my accomplishments, as I am of theirs. My husband

doesn't swim, but supports me especially when I have to get up so early with him on practice days.

The glue that sticks our group together is our fabulous coach, Joe Smith. He thinks he's really tough, but we know inside he's just a teddy bear! The workouts he prepares for us gives us a blend of what we need for whatever event we are preparing for next. And, he has no problem telling anyone of us when we are swimming too d\$%& slow!

As a very goal oriented person, the GTD program is a perfect fit for me. It really makes all of us aware of our accomplishments from all those practice hours. It's fun to see the miles pile up as the year goes on. I don't think most swimmers give themselves credit for the challenges of early morning or late evening practices at competitive levels. My non-swimming friends think I am nuts when I explain what we do, but they don't know what they are

missing. As a proud member of the “speed challenged” lane, I can only fantasize of really fast times, but the camaraderie is priceless. And that makes it worth getting up in the dark three times a week!