



SPRING 2021 NEWSLETTER

# SPRING TRAINING

**Some teammates are training for big races in and out of the water.**

***What are you training for? When is it? How did you decide to do it?***

**Olivia Karlin:** I'm training for the True Width 12-mile swim across Lake Tahoe on August 6, and the Around Coronado Island Swim in San Diego (11-12 miles) on September 18. I decided to do these swims after Coach Carly mentioned open water marathon swims at the annual meeting. I did my first 10K last summer, and thought a longer swim would be a good challenge during the time when I couldn't train for a swim competition. Carly's enthusiasm was infectious, and before I knew it, I had signed up for two long distance swims, thinking that if I'm in shape for the first one, I'd do a second?

**Jon Garrison:** That's a loaded question. I signed up for an IronMan in Sacramento in October. I originally signed up for an IronMan last year for my 40th birthday. It was going to be my big blowout birthday present to myself, and I was going to put triathlon "away" for a few years so I could focus on other interests. Last year didn't exactly turn out that great, and races were cancelled and registrations moved to this year. Because of that, I've been training since November of 2019 for a race that may or may not happen. I'm tired. And sore. And a bit burned out. So I think I'm going to just call it and do a small solo triathlon sometime this fall. It will be a way to put a nice, quiet period on the end of this part of my life.

**Irene Wong:** Ironman 70.3 Hawaii on June 5. I had originally decided on this race for 2020 but it got deferred.

**Carly Miller:** I'm training for a 27-mile swim (43k) in Southern California. I want to swim the entire width of Santa Monica Bay because I feel like these are my home waters, it's where I live and where I've practiced the sport. I've swum almost every part of the coastline from up near Corral Beach in Malibu all the way down to the PV point, which is essentially at the very south end of RAT (Redondo at Torrance) Beach. So, now I want to swim the whole thing all at once. But, this one will not be a coastline swim, but rather a straight line across deep water from Point Dume in Malibu to Rocky Point in Palos Verdes. Only 4 people have completed this swim before (there may be 5 by the time I attempt it). This solo swim is currently scheduled for September 25-26, 2021, starting after sundown and swimming through the night.

**Mel Latt, new member:** I am currently training for either the Long Beach Marathon or the L.A. Marathon as I qualified for Boston the last L.A. Marathon before we shut down. I will likely run L.A. because it is so fun and incredibly well run... L.B. is to be considered as it's a fast course. I ran the L.A. Marathon

in 2020 because it was on my brother's birthday. He would have been 66, but passed several years ago due to COPD. I have done things that challenge me in his honor. I had in the back of my mind that I wanted to qualify for Boston, but when I did it I was beyond stoked! I hadn't trained properly so I think this year my finish will be stronger. Along with that I plan to repeat the Santa Barbara 10K, Waikiki Roughwater and hopefully Maui Channel... all pending them happening.

***How does your swimming fit into your training plan? Or if swimming is your competition, tell us a bit about your training plan. Has the pandemic altered it at all?***

**Olivia Karlin:** I'm trying to swim in the ocean and the pool, but it's been a challenge. No surprise—the ocean is cold in the winter. I'm new to ocean swimming, and the cold affects me, so I can't swim as far as I would like. I'd like to do more pool workouts, but the later times of the workouts are a factor, and I can't easily do double practices to get the yardage in like when WH2O had its own pool. I was beginning to use the pandemic, my injury from dislocating my elbow and breaking my arm, and not being able to swim as much as I wanted to as excuses to back out of one or both swims. But then a few things happened to inspire me. Carly is helping me develop a training plan to do as the swims get closer. I changed careers and, as a goodbye gift, my old office contributed to the costs of Tahoe and Coronado, and told me to "think of their good thoughts for me when I'm tired at mile 10." Hopefully Courtney will join me tandem on the Tahoe swim (which will be a huge motivation in itself). The ocean will warm up, and I'll recruit our ocean swim group to swim parts of my long practice swims with me (Irene, Doug, Geoff, Rook, Audrey, Deb, Liz, Brittaney, David. . . ) to keep the motivation going. So I'm in for trying something new, with help from my friends and the team.

**Jon Garrison:** Swimming is, obviously, a large part of triathlon training. But more than that, it's brought me sanity in a somewhat insane world. Even if I put triathlon away for a bit, I will always swim in some way.

**Irene Wong:** The swimming leg of this is 1.2 miles. I've been fortunate enough to continue ocean swimming with friends about twice a week, but the weekly pool workouts with WH2O have helped with dialing in my pace and technique. They have also boosted my confidence knowing what my body can handle and encouraged me to tweak my training plan for quality > quantity.

This race was originally scheduled for May 2020. June 2021 isn't as ideal timing wise and I'm unsure of how the COVID safety protocols will play into race day logistics. I had loosely planned on stepping back from tri racing after the 2020 season, so the pandemic has delayed this pause. Now that I'm less than 9 weeks out though, no more excuses or distractions! I'll be prioritizing training and working on that mental strength to get this done :)

**Carly Miller:** Swimming *is* my training plan. It is likely that I will build up to a total of about 48-50 miles during my peak training week. There will probably be one weekend of back-to-back 8-hour swims. And there will be lots of weeks of swimming 30+ miles. There will be a solid 7-day week of 3-hour swims each day. There will be 16-20 mile swims. Yes, plural. Right now, there's lots of pool work, focusing on technique and rebuilding my endurance base. Come summer, I'm usually swimming in the ocean at least 5 days a week.

The pandemic definitely altered my training plan in 2020. With everything on lockdown, I was forced outside from March 15th on. I was driving down to Long Beach or Orange County almost every day to swim alone in freezing water. This year, I have daily access to a pool and have even recently found a pool that will allow me to swim long so I can start incorporating long (9K+) pool swims into my weekly routine, as I usually do during "normal" years. I've also been going to WH2O practices once a week and I hope to get there twice some weeks as my work schedule allows. I'm grateful for all of this as the open water has remained cooler this year later than I ever remember it since I started swimming in the ocean in 2016. It also got colder than I'd ever felt it here. I've definitely swum in 55-56 degree water here, but it got down to about 52-53, which proved to be too uncomfortable for me as I do not wear a wetsuit. With my swim being local and in September, the water should be mid-high 60s anyway. I train alone a lot, which I know some people feel is unsafe, but the fact of the matter is, there aren't a lot of people who want to or need to swim as much as I do.

I'm trying to incorporate more dryland training into my plan, but it's proving hard to find the motivation for that. I've also been incredibly busy with work, which hasn't helped me want to carve out time for land-based exercise. Hopefully I can start making more time in June. Other than that, I'm looking forward to resuming regular body work - mostly massage and cupping - every 3-4 weeks. That was certainly one thing that was different about 2020. I definitely snuck in a few massages, but it was a challenge, to say the least.

Wishing everyone else who is in training good luck with their goal events. I can't wait to hear what everyone else is working toward! And if you're interested in doing a marathon swim (like some of your teammates are already scheduled to do this year), don't hesitate to reach out to me. I hope we can soon secure our permits for WH2Ocean and be able to announce the season to you all.

**Mel Latt:** Swimming is a HUGE training priority for me! I am not super fast *but* I believe it is what allows me to run as fast as I do. Especially the current cryotherapy in the ocean!! Swimming requires more effort than running or cycling. At least for me! My aerobic capacity seems so much stronger when I swim long and regularly. Currently I swim 4-5 times a week, run 3, cycle 2 with strength training 3X a week. I make a point to do some core and stretch 6 days a week.... 10-15 min core, 15-20 stretch/yoga. I am not a competitive pool swimmer these days but very much enjoy OW swims and while I try really hard... boy is the competition stiff! I have to just appreciate that I am out there... *Not* on the couch and that for me is celebration enough! I am a tad more competitive running wise ;)

# WATER POLO PLAYER OF THE SEASON

## Matthew Ambrose

**How long have you been a member of WH2O? What made you join?** I joined in July, 2020. I played water polo in college and wanted to continue playing after I graduate. I also wanted to join a team that is LGBT inclusive/supportive so I thought it would be a great fit!

**What is your favorite aquatics memory?** My favorite aquatics memory was winning the Connecticut state championship on my water polo team in high school!

**What keeps you busy when you aren't in the water?** Working! Anyone who knows me knows I am a workaholic and love making money. When I am not doing that I love watching RuPaul's drag race and going out to bars with friends.

**What is a nugget of truth we will be telling people in 20 years about this past year?** Zoom sucks!

**What is your current pop culture obsession and why?** Stand-up comedy! I did stand-up for a while in college and I have always been fascinated by it. I love following all the comedians I like and making efforts to go to their stand-up shows and see their new material. Two of my favorites are Amy Schumer and Tom Segura. I love that stand-up comedy has been gaining popularity these past few years. Can't wait for comedy clubs to open again!

**What is a fun fact about you people don't know?** I have a Prius and I am obsessed with it!



# SWIMMER OF THE SEASON

## Anastasia Kurteeva



**How long have you been a member of WH2O? What made you join?** I joined in October, 2020. I met Mary Church and Jessica Seaton who recommended I see “Light in the Water”, the story about WeHo aquatics. The documentary was so moving and inspiring that I decided to give it a try.

**What is your favorite part of being on the team?** The best part is the accepting/welcoming culture of the team, the fact that everyone is excited to be there, to work hard and to get better. I get inspired and motivated by my teammates and my coaches.

**What is your favorite aquatics memory?** There is this one practice when we swam in a heavy rain, it was surreal and magical.

**What keeps you busy when you aren't in the water?** My girlfriend is a handful. Other than that, I run my CPA practice, travel, and try different sports.

**What is a nugget of truth we will be telling people in 20 years about this past year?** With all the negative aspects of 2020, I think there were some positives. For one, it made people reevaluate their priorities. It feels like before the pandemic we were always on the run... In a way, this past year made us stop and think about what's truly important and what is just a noise.

**What is your current pop culture obsession and why?** In general, I am obsessed with strong female characters in movies and on TV. I think Jessica Chastain is at the top of my list for her roles in “Zero Dark Thirty” and “Miss Sloane”, as well as Robin Wright in “House of Cards” and Charlize Theron in most of her movies, but especially in “Atomic Blonde”.

**Any other fun facts about you people might not know?** Some time ago, I broke my arm doing arm wrestling because the alternative of losing was too much to bear.



**Featured Project:**  
Home Renovation in Altadena, CA

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# GAY GAMES 11 HONG KONG 2022

UNITY IN DIVERSITY  
在多元中國結



Teammate / IGLA Co-chair Mike Wallace: *“Below is the latest statement from our IGLA Rep on the Gay Games board. The Hong Kong Games are going full speed ahead and are getting corporate sponsors and a lot of support from the city. It is most important to support the community there. Hong Kong is an amazing city and this will be the first Gay Games in Asia. Due to the pandemic, the Salt Lake City IGLA meet was cancelled, so we have nothing for 2021. It will be great to see old friends and new ones at the Gay Games.”*



Gay Games 11 Hong Kong is still on track to take place in November, 2022. The Federation of Gay Games (FGG) and IGLA are strongly supportive of hosting the Gay Games for the first time in Asia and have confidence in the outstanding capability of the Hong Kong organising team. IGLA and FGG are aware of and understand the concerns of some members about competing in Hong Kong. We can assure athletes that there is ongoing, comprehensive assessment of all risks and significant contingency planning in place (including support from one of the world's largest security advisory companies). The Hong Kong organising team continue to emphasise the positive and safe on-the-ground experience of LGBTIQ people and the significant positive impact that the Gay Games would have on the vibrant LGBTIQ+ community in Hong Kong. The Gay Games has the full support of the Hong Kong police and government and the security advice is that the National Security Law has no bearing on LGBTIQ or sports events. The Hong Kong team is ahead of targets with corporate sponsorship and will announce platinum sponsors in the next 1 or 2 months. Pre-registration will open in March, 2021 and registration in June, 2021. IGLA is looking to host a webinar in the next few months to answer questions about the Gay Games. We also encourage you to stay up to date directly via the [GGHK YouTube channel](#) and by signing up for the [newsletter](#).



### Did you know?

Hong Kong has the largest number of skyscrapers of any city in the world.

Its residents have some of the highest life expectancies in the world.



\*Photos courtesy of Irene Wong

**Irene Wong:** *"I lived in Hong Kong until I was 10 years old (1994) but I go back every year as my family lives there. I'm excited for the Gay Games to be making their first Asian appearance in my home town. HK is an energetic city dense with skyscrapers and delicious food. For those who have never been before, it's going to be dynamic and loud in the best ways!"*

# WINTER OCEAN SWIMMING

By Doug Wilson



I typically get up somewhere between 5:40 a.m. - 6:00 a.m. depending on the start time. I make myself an iced espresso. This is what gets me going. The night before I lay out my gear: a Roka thermal wetsuit, Roka thermal gloves, neoprene Roka cap, bright swim cap to put over it, and pink neoprene booties by BPS from Amazon. I drive to the beach at Temescal, via Sunset Blvd. This has always been one of my favorite drives in L.A. so it is a bonus regarding my swim routine. There's not much traffic on Sunset as I drive through Beverly Hills, Brentwood, and the Palisades, drinking my iced espresso alone and listening to classical music, no news allowed.

Once in the parking lot, I put on my gear. The entry is both exciting and cold. I splash water on my face to acclimate, then allow water into my wetsuit and I am off.

Depending on the swim, we typically swim approximately 2 miles, sometimes a little less or a little more. I think my body is used to the cold water, so I do not have any problems warming up once we come out of the ocean. There have been exceptions to this. For example, last week it was 52 degrees and that was a bit shocking getting in and slightly more challenging warming up afterwards. FYI, 52 is unusually cold for the ocean.

I also really appreciate all my swim buddies from West Hollywood Aquatics that I see regularly; Deb, Geoff, Olivia, Irene (shoutout to Irene for starting the group), Rook, Brittany, and Audrey. If I left anyone off, my apologies. I feel like I just won an award. Additionally, I have met a bunch of swimmers not associated with West Hollywood Aquatics which has been great as it gives me more days to swim and people to know.

This was the silver lining for me in the pandemic cloud. I typically ocean swam maybe once a week from June to September pre-COVID. However, with the pools closed over the summer, I went out multiple times per week and just continued throughout the fall, winter, and now spring. It is my new passion. Honestly, I think it may be hard for me to come back to the pool.

P.S. I am Winnie the Pooh in the picture.

# Muscle Cramps

By Jessica Seaton, D.C.



You're swimming your last 100 backstroke and you want to clock a fast time. You push off the wall, start kicking furiously, and suddenly your calf muscle seizes up. If it's bad enough, you have to stop and pull your toes toward your shin. If it's not that bad, you try kicking with your ankle at a right angle, thus trying to stretch your calf as you swim. Either way, your 100 backstroke is not going to be fast.

Exercise-associated muscle cramping (EAMC) is not an uncommon condition. Most incidents last 1-3 minutes, but symptoms may last for up to 8 hours after exercise. EAMC is more frequent in long-duration high-intensity events. Common medical conditions that may lead to more cramping include thyroid disorders and diabetes. Many drugs predispose one to cramps, among them cholesterol and blood pressure medications. Other predisposing factors include irregular or inadequate stretching habits, and a history of cramping in your family.

Most cases of EAMC occur in a fatigued muscle that has been shortened during a normal contraction. When pointing your toes during flutter kick, both your calf muscles and several muscles in your feet contract and are shortened. When you push off the wall you're suddenly forcefully contracting your calf and foot muscles. According to one theory, the altered neuromuscular control theory, once those muscles are tired they are more likely to cramp.

Your muscles are more likely to be susceptible to fatigue if:

- you're just getting back in shape
- the workout is longer or more intense than you're used to
- you're swimming harder and faster than you're used to, i.e., all out swims or racing
- you've made changes to your stroke that you haven't gotten used to yet
- you've consumed insufficient carbohydrates to keep your muscle glycogen levels adequate for a demanding workout or race
- you're exposed to extreme cold, as in open water swimming.

The older theory on why people get muscle cramps is the electrolyte-imbalance-and-dehydration theory. Observational studies have shown that with a loss of sweat and salt, especially where the ambient temperature is high, muscles are more likely to cramp. In hot situations it is important to stay hydrated. If you tend to get muscle cramps, supplementing with electrolytes may also be beneficial on hot meet days. Pickle juice, because of its high salt content and sharp taste from the acetic acid content, is also effective in reducing the duration of a cramp (30-60 mil relieves a cramp within 35 seconds). Unless you expect to get a cramp, most of us don't have pickle juice handy at the pool, but it could be worth bringing to a meet.

The best treatment for a cramping muscle is to stretch it. If your calf muscle is cramping, try contracting your shin muscle while pulling your toes toward your head. Massaging your cramping muscle may help relieve the cramp, as might contracting the opposing muscle to cramping muscle.

Prevention:

- Simulate race conditions with intense endurance training, including race-pace training, all out swims.
- Resistance training of both the muscles that usually cramp and, if possible, other muscles that perform the same actions. If you're prone to hamstring cramps, strengthen both your hamstrings and gluteus maximus.
- Plyometrics, such as jumping exercises, may help prevent calf cramping. These exercises would also mimic pushing off the wall on turns.
- Stretch your muscles 4-6 times per week, especially those prone to cramping.
- Have an adequate warm up during practice or during a meet.
- Regular massage therapy is good for muscle recovery and health.
- Increase fluids and salt intake as the weather gets warmer.
- Eat a diet with enough carbohydrates for your energy expenditure.

Please feel free to contact me or talk to me at the pool if you have other questions related to muscle cramps.

*Jessica Seaton, D.C., is a chiropractic orthopedist and functional medicine practitioner in private practice in Culver City. She has been swimming with West Hollywood Aquatics since 1990.*

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# I NEVER DID THAT BEFORE!

By Tom Wilson

“All Swimming Pools Closed.” “All Gyms Closed.” Stay at home orders issued worldwide. These were the headlines in March of 2020 as the entire world was plunged into a dark COVID-19 Pandemic world. No one had done a pandemic before so there was not any script or book on how to manage and cope with life during a pandemic. I was stuck at home and so were you. I had grown very weary of my Netflix options. I even watched every episode of “I Love Lucy” on Hulu. I was going stir crazy and I needed some exercise. As the days passed and the shut down progressed, the City/County Parks started to fill with people escaping their homes to experience the great outdoors.

Then Los Angeles City and County officials issued another health directive that closed all parks and hiking trails because there were too many people out. How crazy was that?

One morning, I got a call from my friend Michael. He asked me if I wanted to go for a walk around our Los Feliz neighborhood. The neighborhood streets were not closed and I did not have to think twice about it - I was in! I met Michael on the corner of Los Feliz Blvd. and Griffith Park Blvd.. Our initial walks were short and very simple. Up Los Feliz Blvd. to Vermont and back. Two miles - it felt great. I started to discover things about Los Angeles I did not know. I began to look up at the trees, look up to the wonderful architecture and look up to the sky. I guess I was used to living life horizontally.

Have you ever just walked along traffic-heavy Los Feliz Blvd? I had never done that before. There you would discover the street is lined with over 300 deodar cedar trees that were planted nearly a century ago. (Picture #1) These historic trees shade the street and the sidewalks. The deodars are an iconic symbol for the Los Feliz neighborhood. This was the beginning of seeing the little things in life from a whole new perspective.



Also, I did not know that Commonwealth Avenue goes directly into Griffith Park, (Picture #2) If you walk north on Commonwealth of Los Feliz Blvd. you come to a gated entrance to Griffith Park. I never did that before! There you can take any number of hiking trails that wind all through the park. It felt so good to be able to move about and do something physical. Masks and social distancing became the “new normal”. These simple walks left me feeling recharged and renewed. The daily walks turned into daily discoveries about the history of architecture in Los Angeles.

These walks have given me an opportunity to see a wide range of architectural styles from Craftsman, Mid-Century Modern, Contemporary, Spanish Colonial, and more. Bungalows, apartments and all the incredible mansions in the very special place in Los Angeles I call home ... Los Feliz.

It became a spiritual moment for me. I can see things that are so simple yet so beautiful. These walks became my way of socializing. I could walk by my friends’ homes, I would stand in front of Lis Bartlett’s residence and yell “Hi Lis!” I would frequently see Rook Campbell and his family doing their daily walks. It was a way of seeing each other without being in physical proximity.

Building self-confidence, I began to ask my fellow WH2O friends to join me for walks. I walked the streets of West Hollywood with Chuck Larson, Paulo Figueiredo, and Armando Arorizo. I started to wonder what would it be like to do a long hike into the Santa Monica Mountains. I asked Jessica Seaton if I could join her on one of her weekly hikes. Jessica challenged me to try new experiences. Together with Jessica, Jay Olson, and Errol Graham, I hiked Malibu Canyon State Park and the Malibu Lake trail. to Santa Anita Canyon and Ice House Canyon Trail. I even hiked up to the top of Mt. Baldy, elevation 10,088 ft. “I never did that before”.



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# More, Again, Now, and Chocolate

By James T. Ballard

I am a man who loves his fruits and nuts, but sometimes they just are not enough. I mean sometimes it just has to be dark and rich. Yes, I am talking luscious, when more is not just wanted, it is needed and appropriate, especially for those who reject my beloved gluten-filled all-purpose flour. That's because there are things you can do with chocolate that you cannot do with almost anything else.

It is true and all you need is the good stuff, the real 66 to 70 percent from a maker of the divine, along with butter, eggs, and sometimes a little sugar to get you started. Of course, those are the basics. You may need some coffee or distilled liquids or some other random additions, but what you ultimately end up with really depends upon technique which, if properly mastered, will get you to same sense of satisfaction as hitting the touchpad at the end of a 200 fly without all the pain.

I am going to keep this simple and elegant for now. You can smear it on your face later, but you don't need to tell us about that. Too much information. Not judging, I'm just letting you go in your own direction. That is why I am giving you a choice: Dense and Intense, as in a Chocolate Flourless, or Higher and Lighter, as in a Sax Cloud Cake from basically the same ingredients. Remember we are talking technique.



**DENSE AND INTENSE** - The best flourless chocolate cakes are baked in a hot water bath, but let's start with what you need:

Equipment:

1. Aluminum Foil.
2. Parchment Paper.
3. 9" round pan with 4" sides. Preferably, the pan should have a removable (false) bottom or be some variation of springform pan wrapped with two layers of aluminum foil. The foil stops the water from leaking into the cake as it bakes, so check to make sure you didn't tear the foil. If you are using a solid 9" round cake pan, yes with 4" sides, you don't have to wrap the pan in foil, but the cake will not come out as easily or neatly, but whipped cream can fix almost any disaster. No fear!
4. A larger roasting pan or larger cake pan (one piece) that can accommodate the 9" round cake pan, with enough room for the hot water to surround the 9" round cake pan. This is the bath and all you do is put the foil-wrapped cake pan in the larger pan and fill the larger pan with enough hot water from the faucet to rise up 2" on the cake pan as it sits on the bottom of the larger pan. I do this so I don't have to pour boiling hot water around the cake pan before I bake. I let the oven preheat the water up to boiling while I mix up the cake.
5. Hand mixer or a stand mixer. The mixer and the mixing bowl must be clean, clean, clean, and free of grease.
6. Whisk or rubber spatula. Also clean, clean, clean.

## Ingredients:

1. 8 large eggs (right out of the refrigerator)
2. 1 pound of semi-sweet or bittersweet chocolate. Get the good stuff: Valrhona, Callebaut, Guittard, Ghirardelli, or some batch chocolate you love. Above all resist the urge to melt an angry leftover chocolate Easter Bunny unless you like dull and waxy.
3. 1 cup of butter (2 sticks), plus enough to grease the pan, so have 3 sticks.
4. 3 tablespoons of espresso or Kahlua or 1 tablespoon espresso powder.
5. Whipped cream.

## Recipe: This is really the simple part.

- Preheat oven to 300 degrees Fahrenheit and fill larger pan with water (accurately measured using the cake pan so you don't spill scalding hot water all over the oven when you place the filled cake pan into it and make a total mess).
- Grease the 9" round cake pan with the extra butter (yes, the entire inside of the pan, sides and bottom) and then line the bottom with parchment paper (yes, you will need to cut a circle of parchment and press it into the bottom of the pan). Then grease the top of the parchment paper with more butter.
- Cut the 2 sticks of butter up into pieces (size really irrelevant) and put it in a bowl with the chocolate and microwave till it starts to melt. Start with 30 seconds and then stir it a bit and zap it some more until it is just melted. Go slowly here as the less chocolate cooks the better it tastes. You want this mixture melted but not hot and above all you don't want some overflowing vulcanized eruption. Remember, technique, elegance. About 100-105 degrees Fahrenheit will do.
- Stir espresso or Kahlua or espresso powder into the chocolate butter mixture and set aside. Wash your hands to get rid of the butter grease.
- Crack the 8 eggs into the clean, clean, clean mixing bowl (as grease deflates the eggs) and STOP. Look at how much the eggs fill the bowl. Now beat the eggs with the mixer until the eggs foam up and clearly double in volume. Usually, this takes about 6 minutes in a stand mixer on high.
- Check the chocolate mixture to make sure it is still liquid and hasn't started to stiffen up. Zap in the microwave for a few seconds if it is too cool. Then add a third of the whipped eggs to the chocolate mixture and mix in gently. Keep going until only a few light streaks remain. Then add the next third and stir gently, and again with the last third. Remember, the lighter the hand, the better the cake. Make sure you scrape down the sides and bottom to completely finish mixing the cake batter. It like finishing your stroke. No thrashing.
- Gently transfer the cake batter into the 9" round cake pan and smooth the top.
- Gently, yes there is a lot of gentle in this cake, place the cake pan in the bigger pan in the oven. The hot water should rise up to 1" to 2" on the side of the cake pan and not overflow.
- Bake for 25 to 30 minutes. The cake should be set on top except for the center, which should have a slight wobble. I tend to take it out when the internal temperature on an instant read thermometer hits 155, which is higher than some recipes instruct, but then the idea of salmonella is so unattractive.
- Cool on a rack till at room temperature, about 2 hours and, now the hard part, refrigerate for a minimum of 6 hours. Overnight is better. About an hour before serving, take the cake out of the refrigerator and then run a knife around the edge before you remove it from the pan. Then cut into pieces and grab a fork. I recommend lots of whipped cream.

## HIGHER AND LIGHTER

The Sax Cloud Cake, developed by Richard Sax, is really much easier than the Chocolate Flourless, but technique still matters to get the cake to rise up and then fall. I know this may confuse those of culinary impairment, but go with the program. It will only be a failure if a dull knife can't cut it.

### Equipment:

1. Aluminum foil.
2. Parchment paper.
3. 9" round pan with 4" sides. Preferably, just like with the Flourless, the pan should have a removable (false) bottom or be some variation of springform pan, but this time wrapped with one layer of aluminum foil. The foil stops the cake from leaking as it bakes, so check to make sure you didn't tear the foil. If you are using a solid 9" round cake pan, yes with 4" sides, you don't have to wrap the pan in foil, but the cake will not come out as easily or neatly and will probably break in pieces, as if that will matter, unless you're French and used to confectionary perfection.
4. Hand mixer or a stand mixer with two mixing bowls. The mixer and the mixing bowls must be clean, clean, clean, and free of grease.
5. Whisk or rubber spatula. Also clean, clean, clean.
6. Baking sheet.

### Ingredients:

1. 9 large eggs (right out of the refrigerator)
2. 12 ounces of semi-sweet or bittersweet chocolate. Again, get the good stuff: Valrhona, Callebaut, Guittard, Ghirardelli, or some batch chocolate you love, perhaps, from a sustainable source that indicates an awareness that others may not expect from you.
3. 3/4 cup of butter (1 1/2 sticks).
4. 1 1/2 cups sugar.
5. 2 tablespoons of espresso or Kahlua or 2 teaspoons espresso powder.
6. Whipped cream and cocoa powder for topping and dusting.

### Recipe:

- No water-bath. DO NOT grease the 9" round cake pan with butter, but do line it with parchment and, if it has a removable bottom, wrap the outside in aluminum foil. The removable bottom is the preferred choice.
- Preheat the oven to 350 degrees Fahrenheit.
- Cut the 1 1/2 sticks of butter up into pieces (size really irrelevant) and put it in a bowl with the chocolate and microwave till it starts to melt. I repeat, start with 30 seconds and then stir it a bit and zap it some more until it is just melted. Again, go slowly. You don't want to fry up a hot mess. Never attractive and, once more, shoot for about 100-105 degrees Fahrenheit. Set aside.
- Separate 6 of the eggs into whites and yolks in separate bowls. Add the remaining 3 eggs to the bowl containing yolks and then add 3/4 cup of the sugar and whisk together until combined. Slowly add the melted chocolate butter mixture and mix in the espresso or Kahlua or espresso powder. Set aside.

- Beat the 6 egg whites until foamy, about 1-2 minutes, and then start adding the remaining  $\frac{3}{4}$  cup sugar one tablespoon at a time and beat until the egg whites are soft and billowy, but not stiff. It will look like shaving cream if you don't screw up. This will take about 5 minutes.
- Gently mix about a third of the egg whites into the chocolate mixture to lighten it and then add the next third after the first third looks mostly incorporated into the chocolate mixture. Then finally mix in the last third of the egg whites until the batter looks close to uniform. The less you stir the batter the better, but it does need to look fairly uniform in color. Gently pour the batter into the pan. Smooth the top and set the pan on the baking sheet.
- Bake until the cake is puffed up and cracked about 40 minutes. The center should appear fully baked and not wobbly. It turns quickly so watch it carefully. Let cool in the pan for an hour or so until the cake reaches room temperature. The center of the cake will collapse. The cake will look like a crater after you run a knife around the edge and lift it out of the pan, if it has a removable bottom. If you have to flip the cake over because you have a one-piece cake pan, it will look smashed and tragic, but will still taste delicious.
- Fill the crater with whipped cream and dust with cocoa powder if you plan on devouring the whole thing in one sitting, assuming you used the preferred pan, otherwise work it out, cake, whipped cream, dust. Elegant and delicious. So WH2O!

