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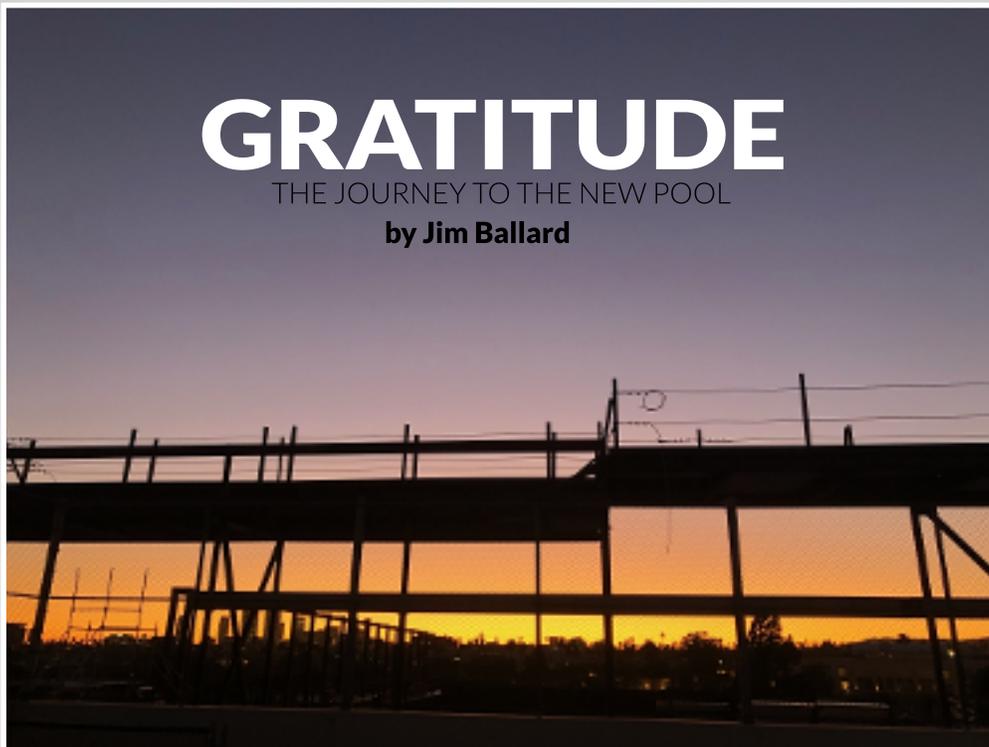
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GRATITUDE

THE JOURNEY TO THE NEW POOL

by Jim Ballard



Take the elevator to the sixth floor of the parking structure in West Hollywood Park. That is where you will find the tennis courts. Walk toward the chain link fence on the far side if you want to see the outlines for the new pools in steel and rebar atop the new recreation center under construction in West Hollywood Park. Look out at the views of the Los Angeles Basin and the Pacific Ocean and remember that for years the park renovation was only a distant hope for the future. The less optimistic called the pools in the sky a tease, a quixotic vision that West Hollywood Aquatics would never see. The truly negative simply said a competition pool in West Hollywood Park was never going to be built, with “never” being the operative word as the crews work to finish what first became possible in 1984, when the City of West Hollywood incorporated and gave our team a home.

This move means we will be saying goodbye to the modest recreational pool that the County of Los Angeles opened along the edge of San Vicente Boulevard in 1961 for summer use only, the pool that was our home for thirty-six years. In its place, an AIDS Monument will rise over the lanes where the teammates we lost to the virus swam with us.

I hope they are looking down with pride for they helped build, against the backdrop of fear and discrimination, one of the best Masters aquatics teams in the world. That is the legacy of WH2O.

I can't say how the club will grow and evolve when we are walking up the Grand Stairs to reach the new twenty-five meter by twenty-five yard competition pool and the new four-lane twenty-five yard recreation pool that will soon be dropped into place on top of the recreation center. That is not up to me. It is up to all of us because WH2O is everyone who walks on the pool deck and wants to swim or play polo with us. We are a team and we change a little every time we make room for a new member or say goodbye to a lane-mate. None of us has a lock on what it means to be a member of this team.

Thankfully, equality and dignity are expansive principles and each of us interprets them in our own way and through our own experience. They force us to look at ourselves, to reevaluate, and to remain conscious of the love, the joy, and the relationships that hold our team together. It is not just about the water. It is about breaking down barriers and giving back and finding our better selves. That is the gift that keeps on giving with every stroke we take and every lap we swim.

That is why, I believe, we survived being bounced from pool to pool in the early 1980s as AIDS spread and some members of the Los Angeles Park and Recreation Department panicked. Even with the help of Los Angeles...

...City Councilman Joel Wachs, pulling down open pool space was hit and miss and always temporary. It became exhausting and frustrating and we never knew if we'd be allowed to swim when headed to practice. Somehow, someone was always questioning our permits for pool time. That is why I thank the members of the West Hollywood City Council every time I walk across West Hollywood Park. I don't think we would have survived as a team if not for the City of West Hollywood. Ask anyone who was on the team in the early years and I think you will get the same answer.

We understood that a home pool was our chance to prove that sexual orientation and identification doesn't mean anything in the water. Pools don't discriminate. People do, but if we were going to change hearts and minds, we had to start schooling the competition off the blocks and in front of the goals. That we understood and we weren't afraid of earning respect because all we really wanted to do was swim and compete openly and fairly, and we meant openly.

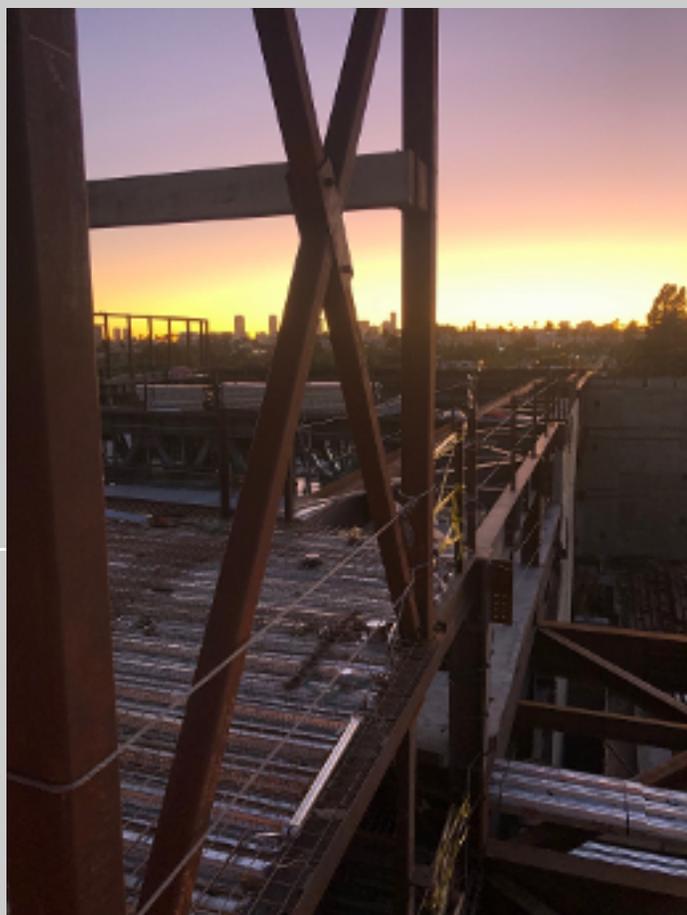
The clock and a scoreboard were all we needed to go from "fags" to formidable in the larger aquatic community whether we were in tech or teal suits. We came in as inclusive and open and over time we created an environment where even straight guys can wear hot pink speedos with pride and laugh about it. Who would have thought that we could build a program that celebrates the uniqueness of everyone as we go up and down the pool? That's what we do, isn't it? Repeat in the relentless pursuit of doing better as we find paths to acceptance and tolerance in our communities and across the world. Call it joy. Call it vision. We survive because of each other.

The transition to the new pools may take some adjustment even after they are up and the water is in. That is just the nature of new pools and new buildings, but we will adapt and, I believe, continue to thrive. We will figure out the mechanics just as we did over the years as we expanded from three workouts a week to over sixteen with polo and open water. Those are the details after years of searching for a plan to renovate

West Hollywood Park and build a better and stronger community.

That search took years of planning, outreach, and meetings by the City of West Hollywood and the City Council, with WH2O participating every step of the way as members stood up and asked how we could help? We were there to help. We were there to give back to the City of West Hollywood, to the community, to the future members of our team, and to the dream that has been thirty-eight years in the making. It is not easy building amazing.

The new Recreation Center and the new pools will be complete in the coming months, but as the work continues, please know that members of the team are still volunteering their time, energy, and expertise to ensure that when you reach the pool deck six stories up, you too will say thank you and realize you are still home.



LANEMATE: Reflection on Trans & Non-Binary Swim Clinic



A Buzzer

by Rook Campbell

A buzzer. An audio signaling device that confirms a user's mechanic or electronic input. Though perhaps, increasingly antiquated compared to a click, a buzz sounds a relatively simple and commonplace function. While not an engineer, I must profess an affinity to the name given to one of the more basic buzzers, the joy buzzer. Yet, even mechanical, doorbell-style buzzers with endearing names become socially complicated and loaded when wired as gatekeepers to gendered locker rooms.

Entering the West Hollywood Aquatic Center the afternoon that our team hosted its inaugural Trans and Non-Binary Swim Clinic, things were different. A double buzzer.

Lifeguards greeted our team and guests to the swim facility by pushing the two buttons, simultaneously opening the locker rooms, allowing folks to choose their own entrance.

While neither the technology of the buzzer or its double action may seem all that remarkable or risqué, this small shift mattered. Buttons may not (mis)gender people, but the structured facilities and habits by which we mark and inhabit space enacts a social power, that is, in fact, stridently gendered.

For our clinic, our West Hollywood lifeguards and facilities staff stood ready and with intention to remark the landscape of swimming as properly welcoming of all genders. Beyond buzzer protocols and reposting signage to indicate all-gendered locker rooms, both our coaches and pool staff arrived having studied a gender diversity and inclusion online training program, *Speaking of Transgender*. Before the swim, we gathered with Scott Turner Schofield in conversations about the training program.

Lifeguards and staff were able to voice some of the issues they had already been brought to navigate.

The idea was to prepare ourselves for the clinic but also to leave a legacy beyond the day and beyond our team in which welcoming all genders in community would be made real.

Lest all this wordiness distort the point --- we did get in the water! And it was kind of glorious. Goggles broke. Water went in people's noses. Dives neared belly flops. There were streamlines that made people feel like flying. For one participant, there was a water inhale moment that caused tears, but as they later described it: "Water has always been denied to brown people like me, being queer/nonbinary, seen as a chicanadyke by most. It was absolutely amazing to feel safe in what I would usually consider a white-space; where I'm normally perceived as an intruder. The momentousness of yesterday felt like a consensual baptism of sorts. My tears were of joy this time!"

In a day-of message, another participant wrote, “The pool is a uniquely vulnerable space for me (and many, I suspect)...dysphoria and dysmorphia kept me out of public swimming of “any” kind for well over a decade of my life. I’m grateful to have made it today.”

I loved shivering together, making my way length by length with other swimmers that had chosen this day to jump in a pool together with strangers. The number of newcomers in the water may have been small, but a much larger community did get the memo. I’ve heard echoes of public dialogue and interest rising from across the LA, from Long Beach and from further afield – from the likes of Chicago or Canada where folks heard about or saw a photo of the clinic and have written to ask how they might participate or replicate this for their own communities.

In wrapping up our water time, all lanes merged for one of those typical “creative” sets. You know, the kind we don’t know exactly what’s coming, but we are on ready alert to the fact that we could very well be made like trick-ponies at the whim of a coach. And so it was. Hand-to-ankle, ankle-to-hand, we formed an interconnected LANEMATE chain, pulling and pushing each other to defiantly ridiculous speeds.

No more sets or drills. Gathered together in lane three, all our hands piling atop one another, Shea leading us “one, two, three LANEMATE,” something new concluded, something new started. Joy buzzer.

My original, white LANEMATE cap is faded, chlorine brittle. In my cap’s aging a new personal time – probably not fully imaginable all that long ago by me – has been marked. Now, together with this team, we are helping create something that I hope will positively break people’s imagination of their bodies, sport and swimming.

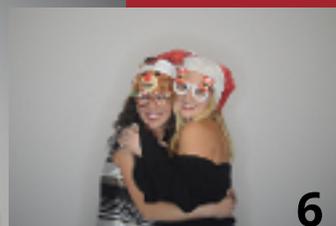
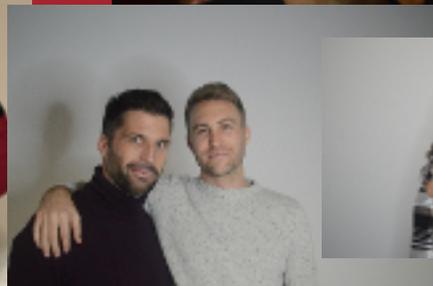
From this clinic of our team’s purpose work, I have a new, black LANEMATE cap. Wearing this cap reminds me how powerful and critical support from a team like ours can be and feel.

The swim clinic was a success because it became ours. What may have been started as a personal origin story of this thing I’ve been calling LANEMATE Project is clearly no longer just mine. Humbled and moved by the beauty of team.

This is how we begin to reassemble the cultural and material conduits to re-signal and cast sport as more of a joy-filled, inclusive doing for trans and non-binary community.



HOLIDAY JOY!





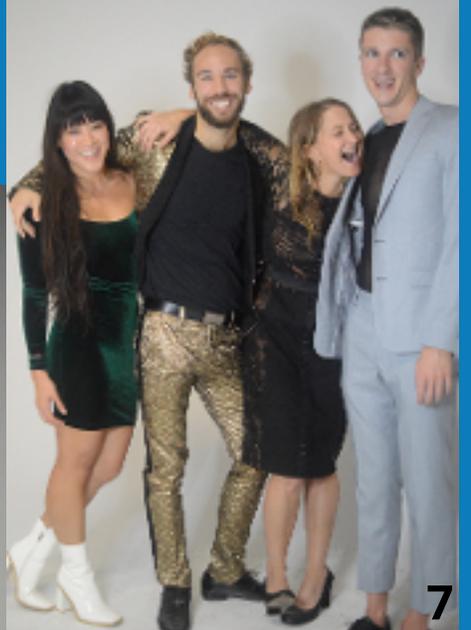
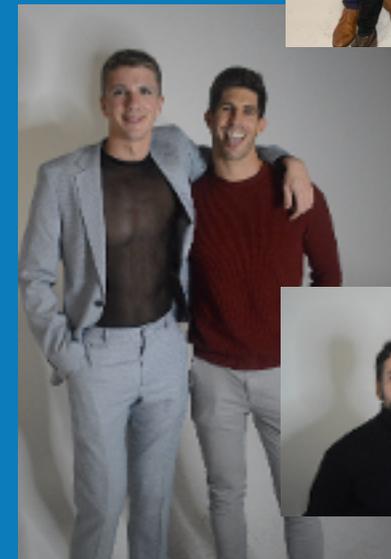
VP Social Jordan Harris: Coordinating the holiday soirée was a nice end of the year challenge that ended up being quite fun! My main goals going into the planning phase were to do something out of the norm yet cost-efficient. I quickly thought of all the cool spots and homes I've been to around LA and after contacting a few places, there was no way I would have been able to keep within budget.

I then came across an application called Peerspace, aka "the airbnb of venue spaces" and found the little gem in Hollywood where we had our soirée. The venue I picked was reasonable in price, had enough space to accommodate 100 people and was central in location.

After picking the location, I created a menu and handed it over to my grandmother who was once a restaurateur in Northern California. This was a big help on staying within budget and she thoroughly enjoyed helping us out at a fraction of what many places were asking. The dessert contest was another fun and out of the norm activity that ended up being one of the highlights of the night. Congrats again to James, Julien, and Shea on winning!

Lastly, the most important thing for me was to have a hot foreign bartender who would make us delicious cocktails. I got the hot and foreign part but he was far from a "bartender." He didn't study anything from the cocktail list I sent him nor did he know how to differentiate the types of wine. Aside from him being useless, he was a great conversation starter!

Needless to say, I've learned a lot through planning and executing the soirée and would do it again in a heartbeat! Thanks to everyone who attended or was there in spirit!





[20]20 QUESTIONS

by Shea Manning

Striving for perfection and setting realistic expectations are crucial elements of the endless pursuit of lifetime fitness and in expanding your overall self-awareness (for body and mind). You hope for Plan A, and ready Plan B, but what happens when your reality does not allow you to execute either one? Can you remain prepared (by making the most of your time and embracing a “ready as you’ll ever be” mentality) or are you completely derailed by the unpredictable? Yes, the answers to these questions rely a lot on the context of the situation; you simply cannot plan for the unknown. The fact remains, however, that the more you practice your response to the unexpected; the more “if this, then this...” scenarios you’ve branched out in your mind, the more prepared you will be to tackle any task in less than ideal conditions.

Imagine you arrive late to a Championship Meet and now only have a short amount of time to warm up before your race. Your top priority is to know exactly how long it is until you swim—as close to the minute and second as possible. How does that time restriction reframe your routine and expectations? Remain calm (because the task-at-hand requires you have greater authority over the elements within your control) and continue to ask yourself crucial questions. How do you get as close to ‘race-ready’ as possible in this reduced amount of time? What part of your routine can be reduced or removed? Factor in your adrenaline; chances are your heart rate is already higher because of the anxiety of the rush. This can and should be harnessed in your swim. How does your race strategy change? Is your race longer than a sprint? If so, how does your take-out effort change such that you will not build up lactic acid earlier in the race than usual?

The most difficult questions are likely to come right after you’ve finished. Resist the urge to disengage during the race, and don’t chalk-it-up after a lousy swim—there is supremely valuable information to be harvested here regardless of how well you do. If nothing else, this is an opportunity to improve your “if this, then this...” game for the next time you need to call on it. Recognizing the nuanced differences will make you a better athlete. What specifically was different about your performance? Not the warm-up, just the performance. Did negative self-talk creep in more so, or earlier, than usual? If so, when? When you knew you were late? On the block? When you first felt pain? Or, on the other hand, were you able to clear your mind more effectively? Did any part of your stroke or mobility fail to reach the place where you need it to be to race at 100%? Which parts? How does that impact the way you warm-up next time around? If you have another race soon thereafter, how do you parlay your race and cool down into a warm-up for your next race?

The obvious rebuttal to this scenario is that, hopefully, we do not find ourselves late for an important race very often. We must therefore seize every opportunity that requires adaptation, and file the data away for our benefit later. What happens when you miss the wall on a turn? Fall off an interval? Forget the purpose of the set? Swallow water during a sprint? You always want to have a question to ask yourself... And the more you practice this, the more questions you will reveal. Of course, we all have egos and blindspots that our own self-reflection will not address. In these moments, it’s critical that we turn to a coach or a teammate to help us sift through those important questions we never would have thought of on our own. The nature of Masters swimming and lifetime fitness is that we will never have all the answers, so it is useless for us to seek answers alone. Instead, we should use the information we have now to formulate our next questions. We will continue to approach the perfect answer, but we must resist the urge to stop when we are comfortable. There is more to discover—our development as people and athletes relies on continuing this exploration.

WH2O MEMBER PROFILE



Jason Braun
Water Polo



1.) What swimming and/or water polo teams have you belonged to over the years?

My water polo story is one of “trying something new”. My aunt and a grade school friend both separately asked me to join my high school team as a freshman without any prior knowledge of the sport... My only relevant resume bullet points being that I grew up with a pool in my backyard and I spent my summers being pulled around a lake on a tube and wakeboard. I had only played baseball prior to high school and I decided it to be a good idea to go to the first polo practice in board shorts... immediately after swimming with a parachute around my waist that evening, I got my mom to take me speedo shopping.

I ended up playing through high school and joined the polo team at the University of the Pacific. I played there two years, and then joined the rowing team for the second two years.

After college, I did a series of triathlons (Including two Ironmans) and very occasionally played with the Sunday polo team at the Rose Bowl.

One evening, I ran into Marcus at the movie theaters (he and I would battle it out at Rose Bowl when I'd go) and he invited me to come check out WH2O. The selling point for me was that the team did frequent competitions and had a social component outside of the pool.

Since joining, I have been proud to be a part of the team and it's philanthropy efforts in LA. I love that we move the community around us when we do our public events and the efforts to promote inclusion of everyone LGBTQ+ and “straight” alike.

2.) What is your favorite water polo memory?

My favorite water polo memory is when the coach at Pacific asked me to apply to the school and join the team. I can be an introverted person at times and the immediate group of friends at college was the best thing for my transition away from home.

3.) What film /TV show/book/podcast are you currently obsessing over?

TV: “His Dark Materials” on HBO

Book: “4 hr Chef” by Tim Ferris.

Film: “How to Train your Dragon”. Pick any of them

Podcast: Meditations by Tara Brach.

4.) Where's the last exciting place you travelled?

Banff, Canada was beautiful. I want to go back in the summer!

5.) If you could convince any celebrity to strap on a suit and join the team, who would it be?

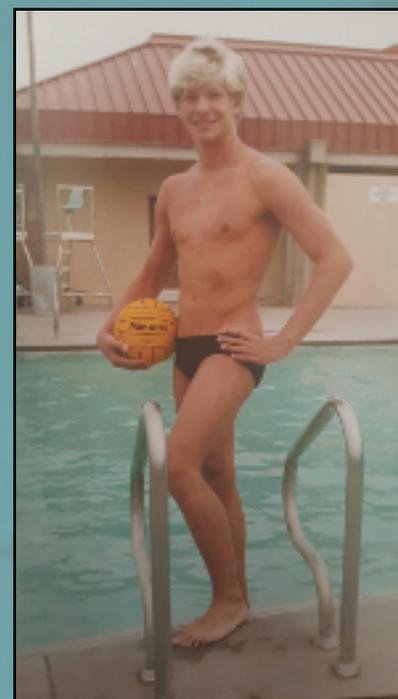
Bradley Cooper. To see if I actually do look like him in real life.

6.) What is your most treasured possession?

My grandfather's rifle and utility knife that I got when he died. I didn't get to know him as an adult, but I bet he would've been really special.

7.) What is your favorite thing about being a member of WH2O?

See above!



WELCOMING MARGOT!

Teammates Matt Schmidt and Roman Charmes welcomed a baby girl Margot in October.



- How did you guys meet? And how long have you been swimming, as part of WH2O?

Both: We matched on Tinder and, after a few months of chatting, we managed to meet at Tender Greens for a romantic salad. The rest is history.

Matt: I started swimming as a 6-year old tadpole and continued through high school and college teams. Took a little break and then joined WH2O in 2006 when I moved to LA. That's 35+ years in the water, thanks for making me feel old!

Roman: Soon after I met Matt, I quickly understood that swimming was a big part of his life. Having always enjoyed swimming, I was the kid that never wanted to get out of the pool. So it didn't take much convincing to get me to a WH2O workout.

Matt: (It took a little convincing, but now he swims more than I do...)

- What's your favorite memory in the water?

Matt: During Michigan summers as kids, my siblings and I were always water-logged at the neighborhood pool or in the lake at my family's cottage.

Roman: Swimming in the turquoise lagoons of Bora Bora for hours with my husband during our honeymoon.

- Did you both always know you wanted to be parents?

Both: For sure. Though, coming out in the '90s when there weren't many gay parents out there, it seemed like a sad trade-off. Plus, in our 20s and 30s we were focused on our careers and our fair share of nightlife. And then, as more gay parents started popping up, having kids became a real option. Then it just became a matter of when we'd do it.

- Once you guys were ready to have a baby, how was the journey to becoming parents? Did you have friends who had gone through it before to help?

Matt: We knew of some gay parents who went the surrogacy route and so we had brunches and talks about the process and advice around building the team of doctors, agencies, attorneys... When you're two guys, having a kid is no accident and takes lots of planning.

Roman: Also, my boss at NBC and his husband are parents to two teenage girls. He has been an inspiration and very supportive of the journey.

- I hear the adjustment to parenthood can be a lot. What's been helpful for you?

Matt: Although it's impossible to be ready for a real live baby until it happens, keeping a routine has helped, and so has having flexibility when that routine is thrown out the window by a tired baby Margot...or set of tired dads.

Roman: Three things have helped so far. Reminding myself that Matt and I are a team and support each other, my mom who came from France and stayed with us for nearly two months to help, and always remembering to live in the present and enjoy this little girl that we both wanted so badly, even at 3:15 in the morning!

- It's impressive how you are still able to make it to swim workouts. How do you do it all!?

Both: Lol, well we're only about four months into parenthood but we'll take the compliment. Now that Grandma Charmes has gone back to France, we are on our own so you won't likely see us both at the pool at the same time. Check up on us in a few months, hopefully we'll both still smell like chlorine.

- Any advice for people who think they might want to be parents, but are terrified?

Both: It's normal to be terrified about becoming a parent, in fact it'd be weird if it wasn't terrifying. Just remember that people become parents all the time. If you want something badly, you just need to go for it. We're here to share our process with anyone interested.

- Does Margot already have a swimsuit? If yes, what color/pattern? When do you expect (if ever) her first exposure to the pool?

Both: She's been gifted several swimsuits, our favorite being turquoise with pink flamingos on it. As for her getting in the water, we'll focus on her being comfortable and safe. Right now she's loving bath time, so next step is the pool! I think when you are a swimmer, you naturally hope your kids will pick up the passion for it too, but only time will tell! What if she prefers dance?

- How does habit and interrupted habit, like swimming, change for each of you as parents?

Both: Swimming is part of our overall lifestyle. Now as parents, making it to practice has become a privilege, not knowing for sure when our next one will be. Now we need to be more deliberate in our schedules and give 100% each time to fight off the #DadBods!

- What's the greatest lesson you have learned about parenthood so far?

Both: Certainly not the first to say this but we've learned that being a parent doesn't have some destination or endpoint, but rather a journey to enjoy every step of the way.

- Anything else you want to add about swimming, WH2O, or parenthood?

Both: We join several WH2O team members who are already parents, and several swim/polo players expecting babies soon. Maybe we can start 'em young and put together a strong relay!

Congrats, Teammate!

Errol Graham was given the "2019 Contributor of the Year" award by SPMS at their annual general meeting in November. He is a former Chairman of Southern Pacific Masters Swimming and continues to volunteer on many SPMS subcommittees, such as Policies and Procedures. This award was well-deserved.





IGLA LOOKING BACK

Mike Worner: "My favorite IGLA memory is from when English Bay Swim Club (Vancouver) hosted in 1989. I met my husband-to-be at San Diego IGLA in 1988 when I was swimming and playing water polo for DCAC/Washington Wetskins. I moved to San Diego three months later. In Vancouver DSST formed a heart and sang to us for our first anniversary. We'll celebrate our 32nd anniversary at the end of March."



Tom Grosvenor: "It's probably Paris when our Pink Flamingo was pink poodles. We never did a 'dress rehearsal' beforehand so when we jumped into the pool and did our synchronized swim routine we were supposed to hop back up on deck and go into a can-can routine well, our costumes soaked up and held SO much water, most of us could barely get ourselves out of the pool. It took quite a while before we were all out and I don't think we looked terribly energetic when we started our can-can."

I think we looked like a bunch of soaking wet dogs who had seen better days. Regardless, the crowd in the stands was very supportive (they went wild) and we went on to win the Pink Flamingo."

Paulo Figueiredo: "My favorite IGLA was Paris 2000 when my sister Carmen came from Brazil to participate. Both of us won gold medals and the team won the Pink Flamingo with the fabulous pink poodles. It was a total success for our team, including the swimming competition. Tom McClay hosted a party for the team in his Paris apartment and everyone had a fantastic time. Afterwards I went with my sister, Errol, Vincent, and another team member on a road trip to Normandy and the Loire Valley. We stayed in a beautiful chateau, an unforgettable experience, and had a special dinner and breakfast just like royal families (lol). Later my sister and I went to Italy together."



Jim Rhyne: "Over the years, I had the privilege of traveling around this country and the world putting on costumes and acting silly with an amazing group of people. It should be noted that none of this would have been possible without the genius and hard work of Philip Hayman who designed and made our costumes every year. I have so many fond memories of Pink Flamingo. My first one was 1992 in Seattle when we were the 2001 Space Needle Flight Attendants. I had no idea what I was getting myself into at the time, but it turned into a real love affair that lasted through 2003 in San Francisco. Here are my top 3 favorite performances: Paris in 2000 for the Pink Poodle Can-Can. WH2O took home first place for this magnificent production. It was fast and engaging with amazing deck and water choreography, all to a familiar song that got the entire audience roaring. The best part was, we all had the most amazing time rehearsing and performing this routine!"



Tom Wilson: "My favorite Pink Flamingo was Paris 2000."

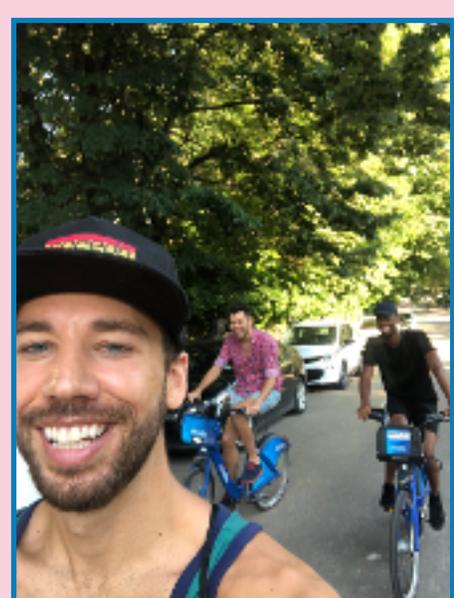




Lacey Rainwater: "My favorite memories were picnicking with teammates in Central Park last year and watching our B team take fifth place, defeating a solid opponent in their last game!"



Bennett Cooper: "Water Polo winning gold! And the World Pride Parade day with teammates and friends."



Nick Peck: "My favorite IGLA moment from New York was hanging out in the Airbnb with Jackson and Jordan and making up choreography and dancing to our favorite pop songs! It was so fun! Also when we all rode bikes through Central Park together! That was wicked fun."



Mauro Bordovsky: "In addition to the competition and travel aspects, IGLAs and Gay Games provide the opportunity to reconnect with friends and family, and to make new friends.... In Washington, D.C. in 2008 my mother flew in from Brazil to see me compete, and to see the city for the first time. This memory holds very special meaning to me."



Errol Graham: "Every IGLA I've been to has been memorable in it's own way based on the location of the event, the teammates who were there, the new friends I made, the old friends I spent time with, and how I swam.... The swimmers in Iceland put on a fantastic meet in 2012 and they were also fantastic hosts. I am very grateful to have been part of the group that traveled to the Westfjords for four days after IGLA. This was an excursion organized by some of the swimmers in Reykjavik and I had a great time getting to know swimmers from other teams as well as visiting a part of the country very few travelers get to see."

Shea Manning: "My favorite IGLA memory is in getting to witness the Ugandan swimmers compete in Paris and New York, as it was such a resounding example of how far IGLA has reached and how much further we are capable of going."





TAPER DEMYSTIFIED

Coach Chris Gibson

We often hear the word "taper" thrown around by swimmers when referring to training for their big meet, but what does it really mean? I'm here to answer any and all questions about what taper is and if it's right for you.

So what is it? Taper is a term that refers to the gradual rest period before any big meet. It generally occurs 2-3 weeks before the start of a big meet to allow your body to recover from all the training you've done leading up to that point. The period you taper is dependent on many factors: how much work you've put in, your age, your event(s), etc.

Let's start with the amount you've been swimming. The more you've been training, the longer taper you need. So, when I mentioned that taper generally lasts 2-3 weeks, that was for someone who is training 6-10 times a week, 6,000+ yards per workout. That kind of training breaks you down, and you need rest to recover. Very few, if any, Masters swimmers are training that often or that much, so a Masters taper may look a little different. The difference between swimmers' volume makes a unified taper very difficult. Whereas college, high school, and age group swimmers swim essentially the same training plan, Masters swimmers are everywhere between 2-3 workouts a week and 6, mixing groups, specialties, coaches, and yardage. Therefore, a Masters taper really needs to be tailored to a certain swimmer, which requires collaboration with your coach or coaches.

The events a swimmer swims also determine the length and intensity of one's taper. A sprinter typically can do a longer taper than a distance swimmer. A distance swimmer needs to maintain that aerobic base to succeed in the longer events in a meet, whereas a sprinter can rest and work on sharpening technique, turnover, and speed with little else other than keeping the feel for the water. A good tip I've learned over the years is to try not to do any less than you'll do in one session at your meet. For instance, if you typically warm up 1500 and are swimming 300 yards plus warm-up and warmdown, it's good not to go too far under 2000 yards even if it's all easy.

Age also makes a difference when it comes to taper. Younger people tend to need less rest than older people. This goes to all aspects of your training: in the pool, weights, sleep, other forms of exercise, even how much you walk or stand during the day.

So, what is right for you? That is for you and your coach to decide. Please have a discussion with all of the coaches whose workouts you attend. If you want to compete in meets and take advantage of taper, please come up with a season plan with a coach of your choice that determines how many workouts you need to make per week, what kind of workouts you need, and then a taper plan for each meet you want to taper for. As always, please feel free to talk to the coaches about concerns or ask questions if you have any. We are ready and waiting to help.

In closing, it's important to remember that taper is not magic, and it's more of an art than a science. It can't make you fast all by itself, but it can make it easier to unlock the swim that is already in you. As one of my favorite coaches, Dave Salo, said, "The swims are in you. Taper just makes those swims less painful."

If you have any questions about taper or anything else, please feel free to ask me at workout, and as always, I hope to see you in the pool.

TRAINING FOR ANACAPA

Deb Jourdain

This year I've decided to do my first solo channel crossing. People ask me why. My answer is it's a hell of a lot easier to train for a channel swim than to date in Los Angeles, and infinitely more rewarding at this point in my life. So why not!

I'll be swimming Anacapa Channel on September 12th, which will involve starting at dawn from Anacapa Island (located 5mi east of Santa Cruz Island), and swimming the 12.4mi back to Oxnard. I took up open water swimming four years ago, mostly because at the time I couldn't find any water polo to play and I had found myself in a friend group of triathletes (hello Irene and Igor!). They encouraged me to join them for my first Dwight Crum Pier-to-Pier race, and after that I was hooked. You'd think as an Australian I would have done it more as a kid growing up there, but unfortunately my mother thought I was too fair skinned for excessive beach sun exposure (she was right). Therefore, pretty much my first real open water experience was in Santa Monica Bay. Not the best. But parking is only \$2 so that's a plus.

I love open water swimming like I could never love a boy in Los Angeles. It's brought me such joy over the years. It's meditation to me. It's competitive for me. It's recreational for me. It's also the one real place my phone is so far away from my hands and I love it (aside from the beach Instagram shoots that happen post swims. These also bring me such joy).



I learned early on for Open Water that I'll never be the fastest. Looking at many of the epic open water swimmers on our team (we all know who I'm talking about), I'm in absolute awe. But I'm competitive. So I had to figure out a way to challenge myself knowing that I'll just never be able to catch them.

Hence – a 12.4 mile swim. I don't really have to be concerned with how fast I do it, it's more to me about *actually* completing it. I figured that it was time to push myself and also it's honestly kind of cool to see the reactions of people who think you're crazy (they're not wrong). I'm excited to test my endurance physically, but more than anything mentally. I know that will be a big challenge. I watched a friend of my swim the English Channel last year via FB live, and it was just so cool, I knew I wanted to do something similar...

So how do you train for these things? The first step was to up my dues to move from just water polo player to *swimmer*. Yay! I wanted to start prepping as early as possible and I knew I'd need to get miles in in the pools, particularly over winter and spring. I'm still swimming in the ocean once or twice a week but there's no denying it's cold AF and I'm trying to acclimate and stay without the wetsuit, but sometimes you wake up at 6am on a Tuesday and just think...nah. Hence, the pool is my new home. If you haven't met me yet just look out for the super loud Australian girl in a Jolyn swimsuit. I also got a Garmin for my birthday because I'm lazy and bad at math so now it just tells me how many miles I swim. Exciting! Our open water coach, Carly Miller, completed Anacapa two years ago, so she's also been mentoring me in the lead up. For me, it's going to be all about building up the distance to the point that when it comes to doing 12.4mi in September, I've done it before and it feels really doable. I've also had to start testing out feeding sources. The swim will require a boat to travel with me, with observers and boat captain. I'll have to feed and hydrate during the swim, so I need to figure out what works best for me and won't affect my stomach drastically during the swim. I won't lie – testing food is the fun part of the training. I'll never turn down eating.

The other part of my training is the mental side. I've got to learn that on the days I really don't want to get up to go swim – I have to anyway. I need to be comfortable being alone in the ocean. I need to be comfortable pushing through low temps and choppy conditions. And I need to become mentally comfortable with being in the ocean for 6 hours +. I need to learn to trust that the people on my boat on the day will make sure I don't get eaten by a shark (unlikely, but still). These made me tired just writing them out.

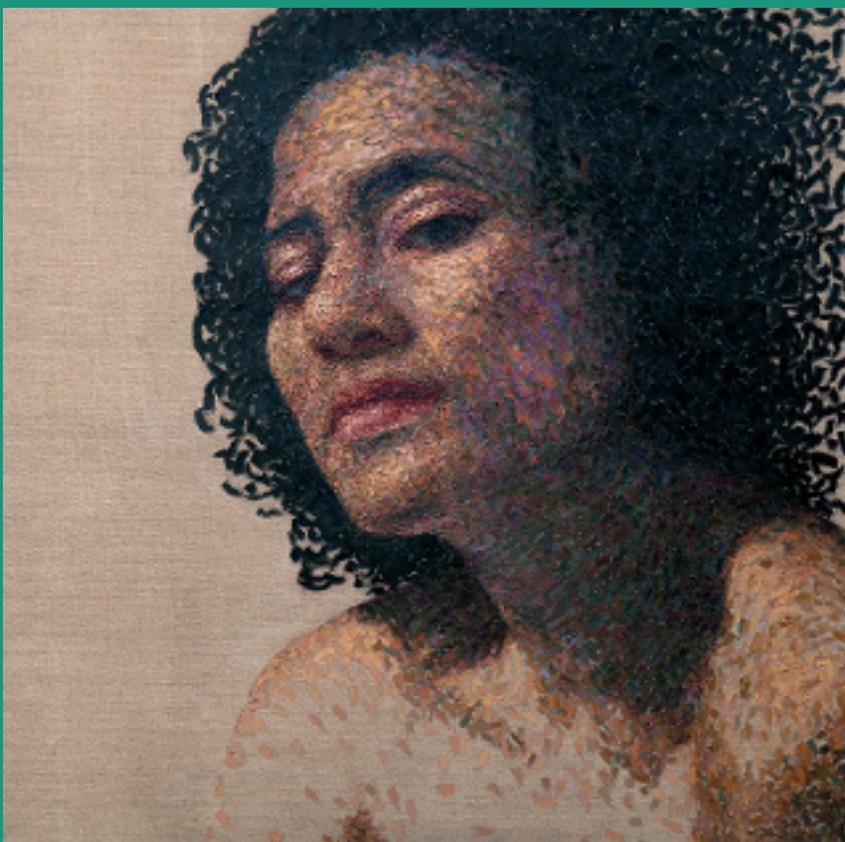
My biggest fear is that I'll have to be pulled from the race for some reason, whether it be weather conditions, or me simply not being able to do it. That would suck and I'd be sad. But I have more hope for how awesome it will feel running up the beach at the end, hitting the wall, and knowing that all the efforts (and lack of dating) I've put in for the year leading up to it was worth it.

If any of you decide you want to try Open Water this year, come on down and swim with us! It's a lot of fun, and who knows – maybe you'll find yourself training for a channel too! And if you see me slacking in the pool or the ocean this year, for the love of god please remind me of this article.



CREATIVE CORNER

featuring Kiley Ames



1) How long have you been making art?

I've been making art for the past 16 years.

2) What kind of art do you make currently?

Most of my art focuses on oil painting, but sculpture has become much more prominent. I've also started printmaking and continue my photography.

3) What is inspiring your art right now?

At the moment I'm inspired by a friend who went through a year-long process of a double mastectomy and reconstructive surgery. I've also started a series on animal extinction and climate change. I also have a future project in the beginning stages that is inspired by people on our swim team.

4) What's your favorite life moment as an artist thus far?

Travelling for art residencies.

5) Does swimming ever play a role in your art?

Absolutely. It will show up more later in the year...

6) How long does a piece like this take?

I work on multiple paintings at a time so all three of those took a little over a year to do. The bronze sculptures take less time. It's a great balance between the two.

7) Are these for sale?!

A few of these paintings have sold, but yes my artwork is for sale. :) [www.kileyames.com]



CARBOHYDRATES

by Jessica Seaton

What you eat matters just as much as how much you eat. Food consists of macronutrients (carbohydrates, proteins, fats, fiber), and micronutrients (vitamins, minerals, phytonutrients). Macronutrients make up the bulk of the diet and are required in relatively large amounts on a daily basis.

Carbohydrates consist of chains of sugar molecules and are the body's main source of energy. When you read a food label it will list: total carbohydrate, and then break it down into total sugars, added sugars, and perhaps dietary fiber. Your brain can only use carbs in the form of glucose, a sugar, for energy.

When you're working out for an hour or less, your body is mainly using carbs for energy. The idea behind low carb diets is to encourage your body to use fat and protein as fuel. Because your body has to convert fat or protein to sugar, the process is slower and less efficient.

If you find that after an hour of swimming your body is beginning to flag, you may need to refuel with a carbohydrate drink during practice. A lot of commercial products, like Gatorade, can be watered down and still give you an energy boost.

Good sources of carbohydrates will also provide you with micronutrients. Fiber slows down digestion, stabilizes blood sugar, helps reduce cholesterol, and feeds your gut microbiome. Particularly good sources of carbohydrates with fiber are:

Vegetables include artichokes, broccoli, Brussels sprouts, beets, and all legumes (which are also a good source of protein). Good starchy vegetables include sweet potatoes and carrots.

Fruits are high in sugar and should be eaten whole. Berries are particularly good sources of micronutrients and fiber. Whole fruit is better than juice.

Unprocessed Whole grains (steel cut oats, brown rice, quinoa) are high in fiber and are nutrient-dense, which allow you to feel full longer. Refined grains and sugars promote inflammation and should be avoided.

Legumes, such as beans, peas, tofu, and peanuts, are high in carbohydrates, protein, and fiber. Dairy products such as cheese, yoghurt, and milk are high in carbohydrates, protein, and fat. Plain yoghurt is better than flavored yoghurt, which often includes added sugar.

Most healthy people should get 45% to 50% of their daily calories from carbohydrates. Some people do better with up to 65% of their calories from carbohydrates, whereas others are better off with 20% to 40% of their daily calories from carbohydrates. Experiment and see what percentage makes you feel best.

Jessica Seaton, D.C. is a chiropractor in private practice in Culver City and is certified in Functional Medicine. She has been swimming with West Hollywood Aquatics since 1990.

COMPETITION RECAP

Bob Nealy

by Mike Crosby

In December, 15 of our water polo players braved the outdoor pools and rain at the 4th annual Bob Nealy Memorial tournament in San Juan Capistrano. The men battled versus four SoCal teams: Newport (L, 11-14), Riptide (W 19-7), Falcon/Crescenta Valley (L, 11-17), and Armada (W, 14-12), and we finished 3rd out of six teams in the "classic" bracket. As coach, I was very impressed with how well we played. While we have some things to work on including drop + help defenses, shot placement, and game intelligence/awareness, this may be the most consistent we've been against strong teams! The Falcon coach said we have better team chemistry than most and they are eager to set up scrimmages with us. Kevin Nebrejas debuted in his first tournament, and Lacey Rainwater and Vicky Gyoffry competed in the first women's division of Bob Nealy.



Regionals

by Jessica Seaton

Congratulations to all the swimmers who swam at the Short Course Meters Regional Championships in City of Commerce hosted by the Long Beach Grunions. Our club came in 3rd overall! We were 2nd among the men and 8th among the women out of over 50 clubs competing. Go West Hollywood Aquatics!

A special shout out to the High Point Winners: Antoine Kunsch and Liz Vucinich! Good job!



CALENDAR

upcoming events

FEBRUARY 9

IGLA send-off potluck and team photo at VNSO.



FEBRUARY 15-17

Surf City Water Polo Tournament in Huntington Beach.



FEBRUARY 1-25

IGLA in Melbourne, Australia!



MARCH 27-29

Palm Springs Training Camp!



April 23-26

USMS 2020 Spring Nationals in San Antonio, TX.

[Email Liz Vucinich at elizabethvucinich@gmail.com with any questions.]



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