

A Bi-Monthly Publication of your Arizona Local Masters Swim Committee

Polar Bear Classic: An Ice Breaker For New Arizona Masters

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IT STILL BEATS SWIMMING INDOORS Among the 100 or so contestants bundled up for the chilly start of the Polar Bear Classic in Tucson last month were these swimmers representing Ventana Canyon Masters. It was a first Masters meet for many of them, and it won't be their last.

Every Monday through Friday at 9 a.m. at what is arguably the most scenic outdoor pool in Arizona, about 15 or so members of Ventana Canyon Masters slip into their element and out of their comfort zones for an hour coached workout. With Tucson's magnificent Catalina Mountains as their backdrop, they comply with their coach's commands with scarcely a complaint. They've been following the routine for years, these swimmers of every ability, getting stronger and faster along the way. And yet, as a team, they'd never entered a Masters meet. Why? Nobody had ever asked them to.

The Polar Bear meet last month changed all that. Eight Ventana Canyon Masters entered the meet and double that number of teammates and supporters turned out to cheer them on. Donning their bright pink caps, this spirit-filled team brightened the pool deck that chilly morning and throughout the sunny afternoon, racking up a sizeable number of points along the way. Apprehensive before the meet (What if I'm the slowest one? What if I can't pull myself out of the pool? What if I lose my goggles off the block?), their times surprised them. The experience emboldened them. In the end, the waterlogged crew divvied up and swam two relays--back to back. They were having too much fun to leave!

It just goes to show that no matter what kind of swimmer you are, novice to accomplished, if you hook up with the right team and the right coach, there is no end to what you can achieve. All you need to do is to surround yourself with a group that provides mutual encouragement and support, put in the effort, and take a few risks. Regardless of your times in the pool, you can always measure your results in fitness and friendships. And that's what Masters Swimming is all about. [More photos from the Polar Bear Classic inside.]

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A Brief History Of USMS and AZ LMSC

By Helen Bayly, AZ LMSC History Committee, fmr. member, USMS History and Archives Committee

www.usms.org History and Archives is packed with items of Masters historical interest, as this first paragraph indicates:

Master Swimming officially started May 2, 1970 after Captain Ransom J. Arthur, M.D., a San Diego navy doctor, convinced John Spannuth, President of the Coaches Association, to hold the first National Masters Swimming Championships in his Amarillo Aquatic Club pool. Ransom felt that if the incentive was appealing, it would give older swimmers (ex-competitors and beginners) a goal for keeping physically fit.

Dr. Arthur's mission of encouraging adults to improve fitness through swimming has grown over the years into a nationwide organization of over 42,000 adult swimmers.

In Arizona, Edie Gruender is known as the Mother of AZ Masters Swimming. Arriving in Phoenix in 1960, Edie had looked for swimming-water for herself and her children - swimming at the YMCA once weekly, and with the AAU. Through that, according to the February 1977 Arizona Republic, Edie was approached to run the first Masters swim program in 1973.

The rest is history. Edie Gruender organised meets, contacted swimmers, from 1973 to 1993 - all without computers, but by postcards and phone-calls, and with the support of her husband Dan (while trained as a teacher, and while raising five children).

In 1989 USMS honored the two Gruenders with its highest tribute, the Ransom J. Arthur Award, for their shared extraordinary efforts to help bring fitness swimming to adults, and adults to swimming for fitness, camaraderie and competition. Both Edie and Dan have held national office in USMS; Dan was USMS President for 4 years, 1990 thru 1993 inclusive.

Following Edie's 20-year effort to establish and nurture Masters swimming in Arizona, other Masters have chaired our AZ LMSC to its current 34th year: Judy Gillies, Tucson; Jack Salvatore, Phoenix; Helen Bayly, Tucson; Sam Perry, Phoenix; Katy James, Tempe; Doug Adamavich, Phoenix. We try to elect Chairs every couple of years from wide range of Arizona places!

The Edie and Dan Gruender Award was established by the Board in 2003, in honor of the Gruenders who together founded and sustained Arizona Masters Swimming for its first 30 years (1973-2003). This award is an annual award given to that person (member or not of Arizona Masters Swimming) who contributes the most to AZ LMSC in any given year. Awardees to date are the Gruenders themselves in 2003, then Mark Gill, Jim Stites and Judy Gillies in successive years.



Edie and Dan Gruender at the 2007 Polar Bear Classic

For further entertaining insights into US and AZ Masters Swimming history, see webpage www.usms.org - there you can check out the Gruenders' and many others' roles in USMS and AZ LMSC history.

Winter Pleasures...



Rare Snow Day in Tucson, as viewed from the pool deck at Ventana Canyon, just one of dozens of pools around the state enjoyed year round by Arizona Masters Swimmers



Flagstaffer Liz Hobbs and family know snow. But here they are enjoying the Tucson sunshine in between events at the Polar Bear Classic.



Showing their Green Valley Grins...Max Von Isser and Kathleen Keller

Upcoming Sanctioned Events

March 11
Sun Devil
Invitational
At Mona
Plummer,
Tempe

March 30-
April 1
Arizona
Short Course
State Champs
At Brophy
Sports
Complex,
Phoenix

May 17-20
2007 USMS
National
Short Course
Champs
Weyerheuser
King County
Aquatic
Center,
Federal Way,
Washington

July 28 – 29
Arizona Long
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