

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

## Desert Doc Rounds 'The Rock' to Win

*Swim Arizona* is published six times a year (January, March, May, July, September, November) by the Arizona Local Masters Swim Committee (AZ LMSC). If you are not a member of AZ LMSC and wish to receive a printed copy of *Swim Arizona*, please send a check for \$8.00 to Treasurer, AZ LMSC. *Swim Arizona* is also available as an Adobe Acrobat™ document. Send submissions to [junehussey@msn.com](mailto:junehussey@msn.com) in one of the following electronic formats: Text (\*.txt), Microsoft Word™ (\*.doc), or Microsoft Excel™ (\*.xls) and Photos as .jpg files. Articles are due on the 15th of the month before the publication date. *Swim Arizona* reserves the right to edit or not publish submissions for publication. We welcome your widespread use and sharing of our materials, and ask that you give credit to AZ LMSC. Printed in the United States of America.

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*Glendale Emergency Room physician Kurt Dickson parlayed his timeshare vacation last May into a new event record in the Second Annual Swim Around the Rock.*

Like other adult swim fanatics you may resemble, Arizona Masters Swimmer Kurt Dickson plans his family vacations around swim events. "I can't go on a vacation without a race to do," he confesses. So last spring, before his timeshare opportunity expired, he hunted around and found a race taking place at Alcatraz on May 27.

The Swim Around the Rock (SAR) is a chilly 3.25 mile swim through the San Francisco Bay from the shores of Aquatic Park out and around Alcatraz Island and back. Kurt had already twice done Escape from Alcatraz (which is half the distance) with a wetsuit. This time, he would attempt the longer duration in these waters without one.

When he showed up for the practice swim in Aquatic Park the day before the race, it was windy and cold with air and water temperatures in the low 50s. Being a Zonie, Kurt figured that if he got in that day, he would never thaw out before the race. So he opted to stay dry.

"I just watched everyone freeze and tried not to psych myself out too bad," Kurt told *Swim Arizona*.

The race director introduced a few notables at the pre-race dinner, including several English Channel swimmers and a former Latin American Open Water champion. The swimmers were given tide charts and told they would be starting with a flood tide (which would push them back toward shore) so they would need to shoot for the middle of the island. As the 39-year-old Arizona Masters swimmer pondered the logistics of the current and the elite field of contestants, he came to only one conclusion: "I was completely out of my league."

But Kurt was not among the 50 elite-level swimmers entered in this grueling race by any fluke. Having competed in over 100 triathlons including four Ironman challenges, he had the credentials to qualify. And unlike many triathletes, swimming is

Arizona LMSC  
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Doug Adamavich  
[dpa\\_az@cox.net](mailto:dpa_az@cox.net)  
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[greggandrew@gmail.com](mailto:greggandrew@gmail.com)  
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[e\\_swims@hotmail.com](mailto:e_swims@hotmail.com)

## FORD AQUATICS

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## AT LARGE

Dan Gruender  
[ediebg@cox.net](mailto:ediebg@cox.net)  
480-946-5805

Eddie Gruender  
[ediebg@cox.net](mailto:ediebg@cox.net)  
480-946-5805

Gordon Gillin  
[Swimgordon@aol.com](mailto:Swimgordon@aol.com)  
520-825-8261

## Doc Rocks, continued from page one

his strong suit. In fact, he was dubbed "Racer of the Day" during Ironman Canada 2006 for having the fastest swim split of all finishers. The repeat USMS All-American was also the National USMS 10K Open Water Champion in his age group in 2006.

Still, all the experience in the world couldn't keep Kurt warm enough on race morning. It was cold and overcast. He kept his parka and all his clothes on as long as possible. Then, with just two minutes to start, he stripped down to his trusty Speedo, cap and goggles and hustled down to the beach. No grease. As the horn sounded, Kurt took a few elbows from swimmers more anxious to get into that frigid water than he was.

"I forgot how cold 53 degrees was," he said.

Back home, Kurt had been swimming at Lake Pleasant once a week since late March. However, by May the lake was already well into the 70s. Clearly, his body wasn't accustomed to temperatures in the Bay. Still, after the first few minutes, he discovered that the cold was not much of a problem. However, he said the tide presented a bigger challenge than he had expected.

"I was washed clear to one side of Alcatraz and felt like I was swimming in place for several minutes to get back to the island."

The other swimmers must have misjudged the tides as well. Some of them even ran into the Rock. First to reach the island, Kurt rolled over and did a few strokes of backstroke and saw someone about 10 yards behind him. When Kurt turned the corner into the real turbulent waves, he felt the closing swimmer touch his feet.

At that point, with a little over a mile to go, Kurt had a big decision to make: A) Let the other swimmer lead and spend some energy sighting or B) Put the hammer down and hope the other swimmer would not draft off him to win in the last 100 meters.

"I chose B," he said, "which was always my guess in medical school.

"I really hurt myself the last 25 minutes or so," Kurt recalls. I guess he must have. He finished the race in 1 hour 14 minutes and 45 seconds, about five minutes under last year's record and four minutes ahead of the 2nd place finisher! He hammered all right. And hard. His wife Catherine, and two of his four children, Brenna and Keith, were there on the beach with hugs and towels to greet him.

"When I hit the beach, I could barely walk because of the dizziness," which, the good doctor explains, is a cold caloric reflex.

"I dragged my frozen hiney up to the sauna, crashed on a bench for about 30 minutes, and imagined I was back in the desert--best 7 dollars ever spent."

For all his pain and glory, Kurt received some nice awards and a brief post race interview with the San Francisco news media.

"I don't imagine I'll go back next year," says Kurt "as they are offering \$3000 dollars for next year's winner, which I'm sure will bring out all the real swimmers and leave us posers in the proverbial dust." I guess we shall have to wait and see who shows up to challenge Kurt's record-breaking performance.

Kurt trains mainly on his own, sometimes joining SunWest Swimming (Glendale-Arrowhead Ranch), and other times joining Matt Rankin's age-groupers at West Side Silverfins. His ultimate goal is to cross the English Channel. The biggest concern he has about it is the cold water. His victory at Alcatraz certainly will help allay those fears. We'll be rooting for you, Kurt.

*Kurt competes regularly at Arizona Masters and USMS events. Next time you see him, be sure to say hello.*

## Nominations Now Due for The ANNUAL GRUENDER AWARD

The AZ-LMSC board is now looking for nominees for the 2007 Gruender Award. This award will be presented to the one person or group (swimmers or volunteers) the board feels has done the most for our AZ-LMSC within the last year. Please give the name of your nominee, with a little write up, to any of the board members listed in this newsletter or to your coach, or email it directly to [jgillies2@cox.net](mailto:jgillies2@cox.net). The names and write-ups will be brought before the AZ-LMSC for a vote. The award will be presented to the recipient on deck during our Short Course Meters Championship Meet on Nov. 11th at ASU. If you have any questions, please contact, Judy Gillies at [jgillies2@cox.net](mailto:jgillies2@cox.net) or Edie or Dan Gruender at [ediebg@cox.net](mailto:ediebg@cox.net).

### Visit our New Website

Our new webmaster has been spinning a new website for us. Soon we will have an updated website that will provide additional information to our visitors and present that content in a visually-appealing manner.

You will find the new site at [www.azlmsc.org](http://www.azlmsc.org). Please note change in url.

Right now the site is still under construction but it has the meet entry forms for our three short-course meets this fall along with two open water events in Mexico.

The site will officially launch mid September and will have much more content than before. We will also add new style and functional elements over the coming weeks and months. So keep coming back to visit the new and improved site.

### Visit our Blog

For all the latest news from Arizona Masters.  
<http://www.azlmsc.blogspot.com>

Still Have Questions?  
Call our information line, 24-7

480-365-0037

Looking for reporters: Do you go to competitions and take photos? Care to share? We can't cover all the swimming news without your help. We welcome all submissions. Please contact Swim Arizona editor at [junehussey@msn.com](mailto:junehussey@msn.com).

### Upcoming Sanctioned Events

October 21, Fall  
Classic, Short  
Course Meters,  
Flagstaff, entries  
due October 17

November 9, 10,  
11, SCM State  
Meet "Ron  
Johnson  
Invitational" at  
ASU, entries due  
Nov. 3

November 17,  
Senior Olympics  
Swim Relay Meet,  
Bell Rec. Center,  
entries due Oct. 26

Meet Fliers and  
Entry Forms are  
now available at  
[www.azlmsc.org](http://www.azlmsc.org)

Note to Traveling  
Swimmers: The  
SPMA SCM  
Championship  
meet will be held  
at Belmont Plaza  
in Long Beach  
Friday, November  
30 - Sunday,  
December 2, 2007.  
For more  
information, visit  
[www.spma.net](http://www.spma.net).

## Out in the Open...Water, that is!

Arizona Masters swimmers **Patrick Brundage** and **Joanne Menard** competed in the 2007 USMS Open Water National Championships in Sandpoint, ID on August 4. In addition to over 100 registered Masters competitors, there were 564 additional finishers of all ages in the 13th annual Long Bridge Swim, a 1.76-mile swim across magnificent Lake Pend Oreille. Joanne won her age group and Patrick got third (and fifth overall). They both highly recommend this swim to other Arizona Masters. Next year's event will take place August 2. For a personal account of Patrick's experience, visit [www.azlmsc.blogspot.com](http://www.azlmsc.blogspot.com). For information on the swim, visit [www.longbridgeswim.com](http://www.longbridgeswim.com).

Sun Devil Masters Swimmer **John Evans** made history in late August when he and five other men completed a two-day, double diagonal crossing of Lake Tahoe, 44 miles round trip. Divided in two teams of three, each swimmer completed about 15 miles. No strangers to the lake, John and his brother had completed a 10-day 60-mile relay swim around the lake last summer. They took on the latest endeavor with a goal to raise \$10,000 for the National Brain Tumor Foundation, having been inspired by the battle being waged by a close friend recently diagnosed with brain cancer.

John reports to *Swim Arizona*: "While it was a difficult endeavor, all of the participants really enjoyed ourselves. If I had not been swimming 2-3 days a week with Sun Devil Masters, I'm not sure I would have been able to finish!" John was the only one of six to do the swim without a wetsuit. For more about their accomplishment, visit [www.swimanything.com](http://www.swimanything.com).



In late July, your *Swim Arizona* editor swam four miles across Long Island Sound as part of a Swim Across America event which raised One Million Dollars for cancer research and care. You can find **June Hussey's** personal account of the experience at <http://swimforacure.blogspot.com>.

**Monica Bailey** placed third in women's 45-49 age group during the Maui Aumakua 2.4 mile swim on Labor Day. She was part of a small contingent of Arizona Masters that traveled to Maui to compete in the Maui Channel Relay and Aumakua Swim.

As this issue goes to press, many Arizona swimmers, both USA and USMS, are en route to La Jolla for the Roughwater Swim and Gatorman events on Sunday, September 9. Good luck to all! Watch for results in the next issue of *Swim Arizona*.





*Monica Bailey receives her medal after finishing third in her division in the 2.4 mile Maui Aumakua Swim on Labor Day.*

## **Plan Ahead for Worlds**

Competitors planning to attend the XII FINA World Masters Championships 2008 (April 15-25, Perth, Australia) can now register for all their events at [www.2008finamasters.org](http://www.2008finamasters.org). Also at this site, you will also have access to an event booklet, with facts about Western Australia, travel and tourism updates, and an event calendar.

## **Passing Lane**

USMS mourns the passing of Steve Schofield. Steve was very active as Vice-Chairman of Southern Pacific Masters Swimming, was a good friend to Arizona Masters, and served on many committees on the National level of USMS. Steve passed away on July 18 after a long battle with cancer.

## **CPR Training Now Available on DVD**

Dan Gruender has procured for our LMSC 3 DVD's on CPR from SRP and the Fire Dept. As we have learned all too well, you never know when you may be called upon to administer CPR. If you or your team would like to borrow one of these DVDs to host a refresher on how to perform CPR, please contact Laura Winslow, Safety and Sanctions Chair.

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## Arizona LMSC

### COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSONS

TOP TEN Barry Roth  
[wbroth@earthlink.net](mailto:wbroth@earthlink.net) 520-296-4908

STATE RECORDS Hop Bailey  
[hbailey@as.arizona.edu](mailto:hbailey@as.arizona.edu)

PHOENIX EQUIPMENT Katy James  
[katyjameswims@hotmail.com](mailto:katyjameswims@hotmail.com)  
480-897-6411

LONG DISTANCE/NEWSLETTER  
June Hussey [junehussey@msn.com](mailto:junehussey@msn.com)  
520-577-0032

WEBMASTER TBA

PARLIAMENTARIAN Gordon Gillin  
[Swimgordon@aol.com](mailto:Swimgordon@aol.com) 520-825-8261

OFFICIALS REPRESENTATIVE  
Judy Gillies [jgillies2@cox.net](mailto:jgillies2@cox.net)  
520-622-4129

USMS COACHES REPRESENTATIVE  
Jim Stites [swim1@qwest.net](mailto:swim1@qwest.net)  
520-529-9113

HISTORIAN Edie Gruender [ediebg@cox.net](mailto:ediebg@cox.net)  
480-946-5805

ASSISTANT HISTORIAN Helen Bayly  
[hbbb@verizon.net](mailto:hbbb@verizon.net)

SAFETY and SANCTIONS Laura Winslow  
[winslowl6@yahoo.com](mailto:winslowl6@yahoo.com)

SENIOR OLYMPICS Dan Gruender  
[ediebg@cox.net](mailto:ediebg@cox.net) 480-946-5805

HOSPITALITY Open

IMMEDIATE PAST CHAIRMAN  
Katy James [katyjameswims@hotmail.com](mailto:katyjameswims@hotmail.com)

PAST CHAIRPERSONS  
Sam Perry [azperrys@hotmail.com](mailto:azperrys@hotmail.com) 480-941-0232  
Edie Gruender [ediebg@cox.net](mailto:ediebg@cox.net)  
Judy Gillies [jgillies2@cox.net](mailto:jgillies2@cox.net)  
Jack Salvatore  
Helen Bayly [hbbb@verizon.net](mailto:hbbb@verizon.net)