



"Meet the GTD Swimmer"

*by Your GTD Pal
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MEET GTD SWIMMER DENNIS GREEN (45-49 age group)

What a great way to start the New Year: more wonderful swimmers' stories. Dennis' story says it all: Masters swimming is for everybody – how nice to get that confirmed once again

I'm the general manager of Jazz 88.3 KCCK, a public radio station in Cedar Rapids-Iowa City, Iowa. We're one of just a handful of jazz stations in the country, and the only one in Iowa. Previous to KCCK, I was an on-air personality, DJ if you will, for almost 20 years. During this time, I had the chance to broadcast live from under water at Epcot Center, from a hot air balloon and even the back of an elephant.

I am an occasional actor and writer for the stage. I host or MC a couple of dozen events every year, including several road races and triathlons. It's a real kick to read the names of my swimming buddies as they cross the finish line.



I'm married to Debbie, we have two teen-age sons, both of whom are also actors and singers. One is a swimmer.

I'm one of those people who came late to swimming. I was a pool rat as a kid, spending all summer poolside, but after hearing the coach yelling at the swim team one day while waiting for a ride home from swimming lessons, thought "Why would anyone put up with that kind of abuse?" and never pursued age group. And my high school didn't have a swim team.

Fast forward to middle age. I had a host of back and feet problems that made running problematic, so one summer day I went to the local municipal pool for the noon lap swim. It was a 50-meter pool, and I barely survived my first 100. But I kept after it, and by the end of the summer, was pounding out a pretty good hour-long swim.

One day at the pool, I bumped into my friend Nick Gearhart. Nick is local multi-sport legend who swam D1 at Indiana in the seventies. He asked if I'd be interested in

swimming with the Masters group. Assuming "Masters" meant "Swimming Gods Like Nick", I asked "Can mere mortals do that?"

He laughed and explained Masters was for everyone, so I showed up for a workout. My only stroke was a laughable freestyle and I'd never done a flip turn in my life! But, in the supportive Masters atmosphere, I was soon hooked, diligently doing the drills, working on the other strokes and even learning flip turns.

I swam my first ever swim meet at age 38, and the next year, went sub-60 in the 100 free, to date my greatest swimming accomplishment.

Ten years later, I'm still at it, and thanks to friends like Nick, our coach John Dankert and many others, still enjoying it and trying to improve.

Our club offers four morning practices and three evening practices a week. 3000 yards is a good 60-minute workout for us. I try to swim 3-4 days a week, lifting weights on the off days (when I'm not on the couch enjoying a cheesy Sci-Fi show...)

My favorite set is one we call the Complex 1000:

5x100--100E, 75E 25F, 50E 50F, 25E 75F, 100F
4x75--75E, 50E 25F, 25E 50F, 75F
3x50--50E, 25E 25F, 50F
2x25--25E, 25F

It's a continuous swim. Work the fast swims, easy swims are active recovery.

We got involved in Go The Distance almost by accident. I hadn't heard about the program, but last year in the USMS magazine, I read about a Masters club in Australia that's been tracking their yardage (well, meterage to them, I guess) for years and years. I thought that would be fun for our club. So, I set up a central spreadsheet where everyone could enter their data and about 35 fellow swimmers started recording their yardage.

Then, one of our members saw the GTD info on the USMS website and since we were already tracking our yardage, it was easy to join in. I think we were one of the larger workout groups in the program, logging an aggregate of over 9 million yards. Personally, I swam just over the 200 miles in 2008. I'd like to go 300 miles in 2009.

Today, I'm a swimming evangelist, and I'm the one saying: "Yes, 'mere mortals' are always welcome at swim practice". When they don't believe me when I say Masters swimming is truly for all ability levels, I tell them this story from my first summer of lap swimming:

The pool was crowded, and I wasn't certain how to negotiate the lane. My friend Nick, the same guy who got me into Masters swimming, tried to explain circle swimming. He said, "Just go down on the right and come back on the left."

I looked around, didn't really see anyone else doing that, but Nick had forgotten more about swimming than I will ever know, so I dutifully took off, swimming along the edge of the pool till I got to the far right side, then swam to the other end, across and back.

When I got back to my starting point, Nick had just finished a lap and was watching. He calmly (somehow keeping a straight face) explained that I should swim down the right side *of the lane*, not the pool.

I figure if someone like me who had to get remedial lessons in circle swimming can be a Masters swimmer, anyone can!

MEET THE GTD SWIMMER CINDY CLUTTER (45-49 age group)

You'll enjoy reading Cindy's story, I know I did. It is very interesting to see how many of us use the water for "peace of mind" as well as for physical fitness, and how we develop friendships through our sport!

We have another snow day in Idaho so I'll start my story.

I've been swimming Masters for about 25 years. I'm not the fastest, but can hold my own pretty well in the age group. It's funny because at a local level, others think you're fast, but go to a National Meet and you're put in your place. I started swimming with Kerry O'Brien when I graduated from college in 1983. I didn't realize at the time the impact he would make on my swimming future. I still run into him at meets, and the odd thing is he still recognizes me, and by name. I continued to swim Master's and compete in local and occasionally at Nationals and Worlds. Again, not the fastest swimmer but always striving to be quicker.

You would think Idaho would have great facilities, but not the case. We're getting a brand new Kroc Salvation Army Rec. Center in April. Otherwise, it's the private health clubs or the lake. Lake swims usually start at 54 degrees in June and will creep into the low 70's by August. This year we were without a pool until late October, so I froze in the lake. We had a contest to see who could last the longest without wearing a wet suit. Crazy!!!

I find peace and serenity in the water. I plan my day or make major decisions while swimming. I'm very type A, so this helps prepare for a workday. I teach Special Education at the Elementary level, so I can burn some steam off before heading to work. We have no coach, so I write the workout and coach on Fridays. I just love being the drill sergeant, one day a week. Another advantage is I can write a workout with a lot of distance.

I've coached High School, teach swim lessons in the summer, and participate in triathlons and Ironman. I usually swim 4-5 days a week, and average 15-20 thousand yards a week. Every year, a fellow masters swimmer and I swam the distance of his age. This year he turns 60, so the plan is 60 100's, again just for fun. I love to explore pools at a variety of locations. Last week I was able to swim outside on the roof at Harvey's in Lake Tahoe.

When we vacation in Hawaii, there is a beautiful pool with a lap lane at our time-share. I started to participate in GTD, because of friends and fellow Master's swimmer know how neurotic I am, and always trying to swim a little extra. You know, the one at the meet who signs up for as many yards possible. I've seemed to maintain times with age, actually a little faster at the longer distances. I love freestyle and sometimes the 200 fly, if the mood strikes, again it's all for the yardage.

I remember going to Canadian Nationals with a group of swimmers and driving to Bushart Gardens between events, only to forget about a bike on the top of the car as we drove through the entrance, taking down a tree.

I usually am one of the first at the pool at 5:00AM in the morning, that way you're guaranteed a lane. I also figure if I get there before everyone else, I can get more yards in. For some reason I'm not a fast in the Open Water as the pool. I believe it's the proximity of people, and I just miss the black line. I'm one of those people who loves the smell of chlorine.

Three words that describe me would be committed, motivated, and entertaining. I've been married for 27 years to a great guy and have two wonderful girls who are getting married within three weeks of each other this summer. Our family participates in Ironman together, training and racing. My daughter has traveled to Kona the past two years as a participant. The bonus for me is the wonderful outdoor pools free of charge.

Why I swim? My sanity, my health, but I would have to say the long lasting friendships have been the bonus. My dear friend Margaret Hair and I have traveled through life together, with Master's swimming the bond that holds us together. Through celebrations and sadness, we've always made it a priority to make it to the pool.

MEET GTD SWIMMER JOEL SCHMALTZ (35-39 AGE GROUP)

Joel swims by himself because team practice times are hard to get to, he is still a very determined swimmer who loves to compete – read for yourself!

My name is Joel Schmaltz and I am 38 years old. I swim for Grand Strand Masters Swim Team in the Myrtle Beach, SC area. The team is relatively small but growing. The practice times that they have currently are during business hours making it impossible for me to practice with the team. Therefore, I train myself before work five mornings a week and one late afternoon a week. All my training is currently at NMB Aquatic and Fitness Center.

Originally, I am from Lansing, MI where I swam in High School. I was out of the pool for many years; I jumped back in about a year ago and have become a "swim junkie". I moved South after College pursuing my career and WARMER weather. I met and married my wife whose family owns a construction business. We have two (2) children, Brianna age 7 and Haley age 5. They seem to take care of any spare time I might have had with their activities.

A typical week of training starts at 5:30 am and looks like this...

Monday	½ hour dry land, 1500 backstroke drills.
Tuesday	3000-3500 distance

Wednesday AM: ½ hour dry land, 1500 breaststroke drills

PM 3000-3500 IM

Thursday 2500-3000 Sprint

Friday 000-3500 mid distance

My favorite event is 200 IM but my best event is 50 Free or 100 IM.

I have been fortunate enough to continue to drop my times. No major break through swims but enough to keep me motivated and make me smile. My overall goal is to qualify for Atlanta 2010.

GTD has really motivated me by seeing my (and everyone else's) achievements on paper. I went further than I thought I could for an old man. Watching the milestones drift by slowly is a great confidence booster. Its fun and that's what it is all about. For 2009, my goal is to swim 400 miles.

My hope is that people will say about me, he is a self-motivated, well-organized, good-hearted person. A good husband and father. I would be one of the first to stand up and cheer on a team- mate. I will also, always strive to beat their times. Competition is what keeps it all going!

MEET GTD SWIMMER BILL SHEA (45-49 AGE GROUP)

Here is a story about – amongst other things - the health benefits of swimming. It is good for the body AND the mind!

I'm in my 24th year of teaching foreign languages (French, Spanish, Latin) to middle schoolers. I really enjoy cooking, and I offer cooking classes to kids in our after-school program. I am recently divorced from my wife of 25 years. We have two sons, ages 24 and 23, and a daughter, age 19. Being both a divorcé and an "empty-nester" at age 47 is something I'm still trying to adjust to, and swimming is a great help.

I started swimming on a recreation team with my three older siblings when I was about 7, and I loved it from the start. Being on a team and being good at something was important to me. When I was 11, my parents separated and swimming was a welcome distraction during my teen years. My high school did not have a team, so I swam for the nearest YMCA team, and then for 4 years at Wesleyan University in CT, where I specialized in breaststroke.

In 2006, after 20+ years away from the sport, I won a teaching award, which included a one-year free membership at an area YMCA. At 230 pounds, I found some swimming trunks that I could fit into, and started swimming - 800 to 1,000 yards 2 or 3 times a week. I also joined Weight Watchers, which, along with swimming and walking, helped me to lose 45 pounds and keep it off. At that point I decided I was ready for masters swimming, and joined a local quad in April of 2007. I live in Western Massachusetts, where master swimmers are pretty scarce, but I started entering meets all over New England, and I've really enjoyed meeting other swimmers and competing again.

When I heard about GTD toward the end of 2007, I knew I had to do it. My squad works out twice a week and usually includes only two other swimmers. I like to swim 3500-5500 at least four times a week, so I swim on my own a lot of the time. I knew that GTD would help keep me motivated as a loner-swimmer, and it did! I had several rough months when I was plagued by bursitis and tendonitis, but I'd just create new workouts with lots of drills and kicking sets. I swam 383.50 miles in 2008 (swimming 190 of 366 days) - and my goal this year is to swim at least 500 miles.

I haven't tried open water swimming - I like lane lines and walls and chlorine. I'm still pretty much a breast/fly/IMer and prefer the shorter distances. The 100 IM seems like a silly event for grown people, but it's my favorite.

My most "amusing" swimming story takes place in Ft. Lauderdale, FL where I was competing in YMCA Nationals in April, 1979. A fast-moving rainstorm had caused them to postpone morning trials on the first day, so my coach suggested that we hang out on the beach and body surf. As the oldest of the four swimmers from my team, I didn't want to look foolish admitting I had never been bodysurfing, so I just pretended I knew what I was doing. I did my best to handle what must have been 12-foot waves, but the waves easily won. I was sucked under and tossed around so badly, I couldn't tell which way was up. At one point, with a mouthful of sand and unable to breathe or stand, all I could do was picture the story in my hometown newspaper of the kid who drowned in six feet of water and never got to compete in the meet that cost him his entire savings. I finally caught my breath and crawled ashore about 200 yards from where I'd started. (And I did my personal best times in all 3 events later that week.)

My friends, family and students have described me as dedicated, creative, driven, sensitive, and diplomatic.

MEET GTD SWIMMER WOODS WANNAMAKER (45-49 AGE GROUP)

Please read this fun story! Woods was a little hesitant to be "in the spotlight", I think that he belongs, just like anyone else who I've had the privilege to "meet". What a great group of people our GTD community is!

I am a medicinal chemist in Research at Vertex Pharmaceuticals, a small company based in Cambridge, MA focused on the discovery of new medicines to treat human disease. Translation: I make *drugs*. Well, actually, I make molecules that I hope would one day be a drug- most of the molecules I make never make it far enough through testing to reach the status of a (*FDA approved*) drug -you've never taken a pill containing something I made!

I have a daughter (age 11) and son (age 8) who are each active in sports and music. They love swimming too, but not competitively. Between work, kids, pets and activities, life is definitely busy, but swimming is an integral part of my life.

Having grown up in a warm climate (Columbia, SC), I was immersed in water at an early age. I remember at the age of four trying to dive from the 3-meter board at the local outdoor pool and landing on my belly (my first experiment with gravity). At the age of five I learned to water ski at Lake Murray where my family would spend the summer

weekends. At age 10, I learned to ski barefoot and aspired to join the ski team at Cyprus gardens. My brother and I spent many hours in the water- he was a good swimmer and could really go far underwater! My first “distance” swim took place around age 10 when I swam across the narrow cove at the lake- a distance of maybe 500 yards. No life-vests! Mary, can I log those yards?

I never got the opportunity to learn competitive swimming as a kid, but I did acquire a LOVE of the water. During college I turned to running and other sports; however, I returned to the water in graduate school at Emory University in 1984. Inspired by Greg Louganis and perhaps a desire to continue my experiments with gravity, I began springboard diving. I loved the thrill of diving, but quit when I moved to Boston and could not dive regularly. I took up running again in 1986 and ran races from 5Ks to marathons. In 1999, I switched to lap swimming on my doctor’s recommendation because of a back injury. Having no formal training in swimming, I took a distance runner’s approach to the sport- get in and swim (freestyle) non-stop; focus on pace. One mile was always the goal but I also watched the clock and wanted to swim faster (AND work less). I swam on my own this way for 5 years before meeting Bill Paine, the coach of the MIT Masters team. His affable nature made the idea of working out with “masters” of swimming less intimidating. So, I took the plunge and joined Masters.

I’ve been swimming the MIT Masters since 2004 and with Bill’s coaching have learned all the strokes and have even participated in swim meets. I usually swim at the 6:15 AM practice 3-5 days a week between 3000-4000 yards. My best and favorite stroke is still freestyle, but I also enjoy the other strokes. Bill’s workouts include short, middle and distance sets, sprints, freestyle, stroke as well as dives and drills to improve technique. Our group is diverse having members who are novice to an Olympic gold-medallist (Tokyo, 1964) with interests that include fitness to competitive swimming and triathlons. Bill does an excellent job coaching such a diverse audience and manages to find ways to keep the workouts fun and entertaining. I encourage anyone who travels to the Boston area to come join MIT Masters for a swim. With 15 workouts per week to choose from there’s ample opportunity whether you’re a morning, noon or night swimmer. Bill and the team will make you feel welcome and you can enjoy swimming in the beautiful 50 meter pool at the Zesiger Sports Center while listening to Bill speak in his B-ahs-ton accent.

I have many interests/hobbies besides swimming including music, computers, astronomy, amateur radio and aviation. The three adjectives that describe me are: curious, driven and funny.



People have observed that I don’t often give up on a task I am pursuing. It’s true with swimming too; when Bill gives a set, I feel compelled to finish it!

An interesting fact about me: The person I admire the most would have to be Galileo Galilei for his observation skills, brilliant insights and discoveries. Second to him would be John Harrison, the carpenter clockmaker who, with no formal education, solved the problem of determining one’s longitude at sea.

I joined GTD by accident. Just after GTD began in 2007, I happened to be searching the Internet looking for a spreadsheet to track my swimming, something that I had been doing with paper notebooks. My search led me to USMS web site where I discovered the GTD program and met Mary (by e-mail). Mary's enthusiasm and friendly response helped seal the deal for my participation in GTD and since then I've managed to recruit a few others from MIT to participate, including my girlfriend, Maureen.

My favorite swim story has to be when Maureen and I went to Long Course Nationals at Mission Viejo, CA in 2005. It was her FIRST swim meet and she came home with two medals in her age group. What a debut! We don't have much time for competition these days, but hope to return to the blocks in the future. One of the things I appreciate about competitive swimming is that it is both an individual and team sport.

As for advice for other GTD participants, it would have to be the advice Dory gave to Marlin in *Finding Nemo*

Dory: Hey there, Mr. Grumpy Gills. When life gets you down do you wanna know what you've gotta do?

Marlin: No I don't wanna know.

Dory: [*singing*] Just keep swimming. Just keep swimming. Just keep swimming, swimming, swimming. What do we do? We swim, swim.

With my goal of 300 miles in 2009, that is exactly what I intend to do- just keep swimming!



Left to Right: GTD participant, Maureen Dwyer, MIT Masters coach, Bill Paine and me after a swim at the Z-Center.