

Appendix G

1997

1997, the seventieth year of channel crossings, was an extremely successful one. There were three individual swims with two setting records for the oldest male and female to swim Catalina. There were also 5 relay crossings of the channel, one world record set by a mixed relay.

The first solo swimmer of the summer was 57 year old Peter Urrea of San Francisco. Earlier in the summer he swam on a successful relay to see if he was ready to attempt a solo crossing. He entered the 70 degree water at 2:19 am on August 11th traversing from Catalina to the Mainland. Early in his swim he was accompanied by a sea lion.

Peter's stroke count varied from 54 to a high of 58 and a low of 52. During the swim he drank cytomax and occasionally had some sweets of candy and Oreo cookies. When he had some muscle pain he took advil to relieve his pain.

Initially the water was calm but as the night progressed some small westerly swells were encountered. The wind picked up creating a wind chop and a rocky boat.

To alleviate his isolation another swimmer entered the water to swim with him. This swimmer was the record holder for the oldest male, the record Peter was attempting to break. Dolphins also swam with him numerous times on the crossing.

In the late morning hours he was concerned if he would make the crossing. He not only finished in 13 hours 24 minutes and 54 seconds he set the record as the oldest male to conquer the Catalina Channel. He was the 83rd person to swim the channel and the 110 solo crossing.

The second swimmer of the summer was Carol Sing. She had also swum on an earlier relay and wanted to become the oldest female at age 55. Observed by Dave Clark, she started her swim at Doctor's Cove at 1:20 am on August 12th, the day after Peter's swim.

Even though the sea was calm she had to switch sides of the boat to the port side as the exhaust fumes were making her ill. Besides this problem the swim was uneventful.

Carol fed on diluted fruit juice and Gatorade. Each of her feeding breaks were very efficient, lasting only 8 to 10 seconds. As the swim wore on she switched to Cheerios.

Throughout the crossing Carol had several pacers to encourage her. Her average stroke count was 60 and remained consistent throughout the swim.

The water temperature ranged from 69 to 70. Similarly, the air temperature ranged from 66 to 69. The conditions were ideal. Sea lions and dolphins were checking her out during the swim.

She had a large and supportive crew. Whether pacers or kayakers each encouraged her to break the record. At 11:58.33 am Carol became the oldest woman, by ten years to swim Catalina. Her time was a quick 10 hours, 38 minutes and 20 seconds. She also became the 84th person to swim the channel.

The third individual swimmer of the summer was Mara Wells, a 21 year old from Paso Robles, California. Mara swam from Catalina to the Mainland on September 22nd. She began just before midnight on September 21st by entering the warm water at Long Point. Initially she held a stroke count of 60, then increased to 68 after two hours. From

had to change direction to catch up with the swimmers and set them on the correct course.

The fourth leg consisted of Betsy Jordan, Kaiti Baili and David Clark. This group entered the water at 8:08. am. During this leg the sea calmed with no visible whitecaps. Dolphins crossed the bow of the ship.

The fifth leg included Tony Joseph, Mike Meaney and Paula Selby with David Yudovin still paddling. The three swimmers were separated and the faster swimmer had to slow down until the three were back together. This is one of the problems with having multiple swimmers or relays at the same time with only one boat.

The water was 69 and calm.

David Lamott, Dudley Wood and Will Newbern entered the water at 10:08am. The sea was glassy, very calm. The sixth leg was uneventful. When these three finished their hour swim the first swimmers swam a second leg.

Each swimmer swam two legs and three groups swam three legs. During the afternoon the wind picked up and was pushing the boat and swimmers off course. Swimming from the Mainland to Catalina, unfortunately, means the swimmer has to deal with strong wind and buck strong currents.

As the evening approached the wind picked up again, creating strong white caps. The Casino at the Isthmus could be seen from the boat as the relays had been pushed to the Southeast.

At 8:03.57 pm Janet, Debbie and Cathy stepped ashore and linked hands. The swim was successful for all three relays in 14 hours, 55 minutes and 28 seconds. These relays became the 27th, 28th and 29th relays across the Channel.

On August 25th three other relays attempted to swim simultaneously across the channel. Unfortunately, only one of the relays was successful. The members of this mixed male/female relay, named Humuhumu, were: Anna Ray Delozier, Amy Migliazzo, Doug Parish, Jaime Riley-Akers, Kerry Forsyth-Brainard, and Sylvia Glenn. The age of the relay members varied from 14 for Amy to 59 for Sylvia.

The relay began at 9:49.23 pm at Cabrillo Beach on the Mainland. During the first leg Anna saw a stingray. She maintained a stroke count of 72. The water temperature was 71 degrees while the air was a comfortable 70 degrees.

The second leg was swum by 14 year old Amy Migliazzo. She began with a strong stroke count of 84 and dropped to 74 near the end of her hour. The night was clear and there were one to two foot waves. During Amy's swim numerous dolphins swam near the boat.

Doug Parish, 45, swam the third leg of the relay. The other two relays were still going strong. During this leg there was a problem with the three swimmers running into each other. Doug had a 69 stroke count. Besides the swimmers running into each other a long needle like fish was swimming next to the boat.

At 12:50 am 40 year old Jaime Riley-Akers entered the water. He held a 66 stroke count. The guide boat, the Golden Doubloon, had to change course numerous times during the fourth leg as the wind was pushing the swimmers.

The fifth leg was swum by Kerry Brainard, a 37 year old from San Luis Obispo, and was begun at 1:50 am. This was a difficult leg as one of the other swimmers got out and disqualified the second relay. As the two swimmers in the water had to wait for the

swimmer to get out, both had an eight minute wait. Despite this, Kerry was able to hold a 72 stroke count once the swim resumed. The air temperature dropped to 68 but the swells were still one to two feet.

The sixth leg was swum by 59 year old Sylvia Glenn. There was a problem with the kayaker; he wasn't able to stay on the boat, so two other kayakers had to paddle during the hour. Sylvia had a 62 stroke count. The fumes were making the swimmers and paddlers sick. The swimmers had to move to the bow to get away from the smell. At the end of six hours the relay had gone more than 11.5 nautical miles.

The first swimmer, Anna, reentered the water. She had a strong leg as did Amy after her. In Doug Parish's second leg the third relay was disqualified as the third member was unable to swim his leg because of seasickness. This left only one legal relay.

The morning was calm but there were some low clouds. Despite two of the relays being disqualified, the other members who were healthy swam with the one legal relay. At 7:33 am numerous dolphins were leaping in front of the boat. For the next hour numerous dolphins were seen.

At 9:50 am Anna entered for her third leg. The water was flat and a warm 72. At 10:05 am Anna walked ashore at Descanso Bay, near Avalon. The relay took 12 hours 16 minutes and 31 seconds, becoming the fourth relay of the year and 30th relay to ever cross the Catalina Channel.

The final relay swim of 1997 was a double crossing on October 5, 1997. The mixed relay, Top Gun, swam from the Mainland to Catalina and back. The members of the relay included Jane Cairns, Lisa Hazen, Jim McConica, Leslie Robinson, Mike Shaffer and Dan Veatch.

Dan was the first swimmer of the relay. He entered the water off of Pt. Vicente at 10:09 pm. It was a cloudy night with a slight breeze and a three foot swell when the swim began. The water was a warm 74 degrees.

The second swimmer was 33 year old Lisa Hazen. The swell dropped to a one to two foot swell during this second hour. Lisa held a 70 to 75 stroke count during her leg.

The third leg was swum by Jim McConica, an experienced Catalina Channel swimmer. The water laid down even more allowing Jim to maintain a 78 stroke count.

During Mike Shaffer's leg the swimmer lost his direction and lost contact with the support boat. The boat had to make a sharp right turn to pick up the swimmer. There was a dolphin near Mike while he swam his leg. He held a stroke count of 71.

The fifth leg was swum by Jane Cairns. Unfortunately, she was stung by jellyfish during her hour, numerous times. At one point the boat got off course and it had to be corrected.

The sixth leg was swum by Leslie Robinson. She had a stroke count of 74. During her leg the landing beach was chosen. The water was calm and glassy as the swimmer was within the lee of the island.

Dan began his second swim on the relay. He was swimming well in calm water but was also being stung a lot. He held a 74 stroke count.

Lisa Hazen entered the water at 3:10 am and at 3:26:15 climbed ashore, with an excellent relay time of 7 hours 16 minutes and 20 seconds. She immediately reentered the water for the return leg.

Throughout the return crossing the swimmers were stung by jellyfish. The warm water has its disadvantages. It was a foggy early morning but the water stayed calm and flat throughout the day. The swimmers had a good time, playing chase with each other at change overs and at times even the boat. Seals and dolphins were seen in the mid morning.

Jim McConica swam the final leg and climbed ashore despite some surf at 10:56:57 am. The time for the second leg was 7 hours thirty minutes and 36 seconds. This was a record for Catalina to the Mainland for a mixed relay. The double relay time was an outstanding 14 hours, 46 minutes and 56 seconds.

The 1997 season was an excellent one with three individual swims and five relays. In addition, the two oldest records and one relay record was established.