

## **Klein Kin Swim – 8 Family Members Compete Together at Colonies Zone**

*By Nanci Klein Sundel*

*A wonderful story about 8 family members competing together at the Colonies Zone meet*



I had a dream – not, in this case, of social action. This one involved a physical challenge for my family, namely, swimming a relay at a Masters meet with my brother (53), sister (49) and father (82). Jon Klein, my inspirational masters-swimming, world record-breaking brother would be an easy sell, but what about my father and sister? Bill Klein, my father, regularly swims at his home in Florida, competed in high school and swam in one Masters meet 15 years ago, while my sister, Elissa Klein Sireuil, also competed in high school and swims therapeutically at her local Y outside Boston. I could visualize it and had a lobbying campaign planned for the 2013 Albatross, the annual meet at the Montgomery Aquatic Center where I swim. Why 2013 - because that year the timing of the Albatross coincides with Passover, when my family converges at my home.

Jon not only accelerated the realization of my dream to the 2011 Colonies Zone meet at George Mason University, but he recruited four more family members, for a total of eight family swimmers and four relays. My mother, Judy Klein, a frequent recreational swimmer has been at countless meets rooting on her children, but this was the first time - at the age of 77 - that she would be in the pool. Her sister, Priscilla Sprung (70), joined us from NY also as a first time competitive swimmer. She renewed her love of swimming 5 years ago, joined the Y and started swimming three days a week. Herman Hohausler (70), my father's first cousin, lives near the meet in Virginia and had also started a regular swimming regimen. Although he had never before competed in a swim meet he understood the balance between training and competition as he successfully completed his first marathon at 65. He, too, signed on with minimal arm-twisting. Rounding out our relays was Bob Maestro (67), Jon's brother-in-law, who also lives near the meet in Virginia. He competed in Masters meets 15 years ago and recently returned to the pool for regular workouts.

Everyone signed up as a member of Jon's team, North Carolina Masters Swimming and, feeling a bit like a traitor, I transferred my membership from the Ancient Mariners to NCMS. A month out and everyone was psyched – Jon put together the relays while continuing his rigorous training program; Priscilla worked on her open turns; Elissa stepped up her swimming while balancing a new job; Bob, Herman and dad bought new suits; and mom designed the t-shirts. I, on the other hand, cut open my heel on a particularly forceful flip turn, requiring 11 stitches and an unscheduled two-week break (just some early tapering). Pre-meet jitters aside, we were all looking forward to the meet.

The day arrives and there is a full spectrum of nervous energy. On the low end, there was Priscilla, Bob and Herman taking it all in stride; to Jon coaching us, herding us and refreshing us on the rules of disqualifications; to mom worrying about being able to finish 2 lengths of freestyle; to dad worrying about when to get in and out of the water; to Elissa's insistence that she would die doing her individual event, the 200 free; to me not wanting to talk, be photographed or hugged before my nemesis – also the 200 free.

With Gary Sundel (my husband) and Alain Sireuil (Elissa's husband) as paparazzi; our new red USMS caps on; and after rechecking the relay order - we were set. In the end all four relays went off without a hitch. Okay – not totally true. We almost missed the women's 200 medley relay because we were trying to get THE picture in our Klein Kin Swim t-shirts. Then there was the DQ concern in the mixed 200 freestyle relay when dad thought he could get out of the pool and started swimming through other swimmers' lanes to do so. In short, we accomplished our goal – to swim the four relays without being DQ'd and to have a load of fun doing it. With 8 family swimmers, 4 relays\*, 3 first time competitive swimmers – all at the age of 70 plus, and zero disqualifications, we feel like we set a record of our own.

I truly don't recall our times or the placing of the relays – though what I will always remember is how my family made an inspirational effort for this physical challenge to help realize my dream.

\*Relays:

200 Mixed Free Relay 65+ -- Priscilla, Judy, Herman, Bob

200 Mixed Free Relay 45+ -- Nanci, Bill, Elissa, Jon  
200 Women's Medley Relay 45+ -- Judy, Elissa, Nanci, Priscilla  
200 Men's Medley Relay 45+ -- Bob, Bill, Jon, Herman