

Shifting Sands



Stephanie Ganey Photography

The March-April issue is traditionally our open water issue, in which we feature a variety of open water swimmers and adventures, and you'll find some excellent ones inside.

In our cover story, Elaine K. Howley explores marathon maven Sarah Thomas's lifelong journey to a record-breaking 80-mile swim down Lake Powell from Utah to Arizona in October 2016. Accompanying the feature are beautiful images created by fellow marathon swimmer Ken Classen.

In this issue's Splashback piece, Howley also explores the somewhat obscure history of Bert Thomas's 1955 swim across the cold and treacherous Strait of Juan de Fuca and introduces us to Andrew Malinak, a USMS member who's carrying on the tradition of marathon swimming in the Pacific Northwest.

USMS partner SwimTrek shares a few images of exotic trips—the kind of trips that appear on a lot of bucket lists these days—in Lens (Perspectives, page 4).

Terry Heggy gets some open water efficiency advice from longtime marathon swimmer and coach Marcia Cleveland in "Ask the Coach," on page 8 in the Training and Technique department. Also in T&T, Elaine K. Howley gives us some tips on how to prevent cramps in open water as well as what to do if you get one. She also gets some training advice from frequent open water race champion Ricardo Valdivia.

But great open water content isn't the only thing in this issue. The March-April issue has evolved in recent years to include inspirational adult learn-to-swim stories.

Our Swimming Saves Lives Foundation promotes a national campaign to recognize April as "Adult Learn-to-Swim Month," now in its fourth year. With each passing year, as more swimmers and coaches become certified ALTS instructors, we've found that their stories are every bit as inspiring as the stories of their students who are learning to swim.

In Swimming Life (page 6), Gretchen Sanders introduces us to Charlie Simmons, a retired U.S. Army Special Forces soldier and certified ALTS instructor. Simmons learned to swim as a young African-American boy in the 1950s, and ended up becoming a legendary swim instructor in the Army, teaching, swimming, and soldiering all over the globe. He's now retired and wants to continue teaching adults to swim so that they can teach their children and grandchildren.

A 10-year-old grandchild is who inspired Larry Crockett to learn to swim, and Linda Brown-Kuhn shares his learn-to-swim story, along with the stories of Cynthia Bradshaw and Fang Schmitz, in "Discovering a New World in the Water" on page 36.

Recently published at usms.org is a first-person ALTS story, with accompanying video, told by both student Mari Soliman and instructor Megan Lassen. USMS has certified more than 800 instructors in the past two years, with 400 more coming onboard in 2017.

Lastly, Elaine K. Howley, our managing editor, award-winning writer, and resident marathon swimming expert, has accepted an exciting new opportunity. Fortunately for us and for *SWIMMER* readers, she'll still be writing the great stories she's been known for over the past eight years.

Our new managing editor, Daniel Paulling, a lifelong swimmer and award-winning sportswriter who's covered Major League Baseball and NFL and SEC football, has just arrived. We look forward to working with him to bring more swimming stories to life in these pages and online. He and the rest of the publications staff can be reached at publications@usms.org.

Laura Hamel, Editor-in-Chief

Know of a great story? Pitch it at: usms.org/content/readersubmissions

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ON THE COVER

Sarah Thomas cruises past stunning Utah rock formations during her record-setting 80-mile swim down Lake Powell in October 2016. Photo by Ken Classen.

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