

The Next Chapter



Stephanie Ganey Photography

When I took the helm at *SWIMMER* in 2009, I was still high on the rush of diving into our local swim community in 2006 and finding a new family. The opportunity to work within the larger national subculture of Masters Swimming with smart and committed people was a dream come true.

Establishing the National Office in 2009 was an adventure; our ragtag band of staffers started from scratch. We rented a steam cleaner from the grocery store across the street so we could spiff up the dusty furniture that came with our vacant-for-years historic building. We recruited local swimmers and suited up in gardening gear to beautify the overgrown and decrepit property.

Slowly we built, broke, mended, and molded—not only our physical surroundings, but also our roles. We essentially threw spaghetti on the ceiling and picked it up off the floor if it didn't stick. And then tried again until we found a formula that worked to serve and support our members. I'm honored to have worked alongside passionate and dedicated staffers and volunteers during that process, and I'm grateful for their help and friendship along the way.

Since those earliest days, the National Office has grown and now occupies beautiful downtown offices. We have many more and much improved publications, programs, and services. I'm so proud of what we've accomplished and excited to see what's next.

During this nine-year journey, I've had the privilege of working with and learning from talented editors, writers, photographers, designers, artists, volunteers, and coaches. The list is too long for this page. Their expertise and contributions have made this magazine and our online content something we can all be proud of.

And then there are the readers.

You're the reason I've looked forward to every issue, despite snags, snafus, and the hectic pace of never-ending deadlines.

Your stories have inspired me. Your letters have made me laugh, cry, swim harder, and helped me navigate what were once unfamiliar waters, but now seem like home. You have my enduring gratitude for sharing your stories and your support over the years.

Through your inspiration, I've realized that I still have time to see more of the world and that's my next chapter: travel.

My plan is to stay involved with Masters Swimming, but this will be my last issue as editor-in-chief of *SWIMMER*, and I'm stepping down as publications and communications director for USMS.

I'm confident that publications manager Daniel Paulling and the dynamic and growing staff at the National Office will continue to develop and improve all our membership offerings. Please give them your support and feedback, as you've given me.

If my travels lead me near your town, I'd love to drop in for swim practice. If you'd like to stay in touch, you can reach me at laura.m.hamel@gmail.com.

My thanks and best always,

Laura Hamel, Editor-in-Chief

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USMS NATIONAL OFFICE

1751 Mound Street, Suite 201, Sarasota, FL 34236

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER:

Dawson Hughes
dhughes@usmastersswimming.org

Facebook: [facebook.com/usmastersswimmingfanpage](https://www.facebook.com/usmastersswimmingfanpage)
Twitter: @MastersSwimming

Favorite office snack:

Peanut M&Ms

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Laura Hamel
E: editor@usmastersswimming.org
Twitter: @usmseditor

String cheese

MANAGING EDITOR: Daniel Paulling

COPY EDITOR: Meg Smath

Goldfish crackers

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EDGESET MARKETING

140 S. Beach St., Suite 108
Daytona Beach, FL 32114
386-253-0049

PRESIDENT: Tom Pokorny

ART DIRECTOR: Annie Sidesinger

PRODUCTION MANAGER: Virginia Dyer

CONTRIBUTING DESIGNER: Lauren Keirse

Nacho Cheese
Doritos

Cereal

CIRCULATION AND MEMBERSHIP

Jessica Porter
Steve Hall

T: 800-550-SWIM (7946)

F: 941-556-SWIM (7946)

E: membership@usmastersswimming.org

Kettle corn
popcorn

Popcorn

ADVERTISING AND PROMOTION

Kyle Deery

Jay Eckert

T: 941-556-6284

E: jeckert@usmastersswimming.org

Doughnuts

Kettle corn
popcorn

BUSINESS AND FINANCE

Susan Kuhlman

Lynn Watson

Yogurt

Popcorn

ON THE COVER

Casey Keiber demonstrates breaststroke technique drills, coached by Cokie Lepinski and photographed by Peter H. Bick. (See page 22, "Time to Fix Your Breaststroke.")

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