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Portfolio

Portfolio: Writing Samples

Greetings:

The document you are about to read features a selection of work, including media guides, spotlight stories, press releases, and examples of writing for social media.

Another version of this document is available containing additional examples of social media management. Please contact us to request that part of this portfolio:

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Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "C. D. Henderson". The signature is stylized and written in a cursive-like font.

C. D. Henderson
Sharx



Media Guides

Press Kits

Media guides should do more than simply inform the media about the basics of whatever is being publicized. The press kits you'll link to below share include 'spotlight stories,' participant stories crafted into press-ready material designed in the hopes of enticing the media to cover a different angle on a story they may have covered many times before, or perhaps have never covered at all.

Each of the events that I handle public and media relations for has been honored nationally. The Musselman Triathlon has been listed as a must-do race by Triathlete Magazine, Inside Triathlon Magazine, Bicycling Magazine, and Women's Health Magazine, and in 2015 was named the 'Best Small Event' in the world by Triathlon Business International. The Seneca7, a race that sells out in a matter of minutes, was featured in Runner's World Magazine. The Freshwater Trust Portland Triathlon was listed as a 'best of' race by Inside Triathlon Magazine.

These honors are due primarily to the dedication of the race directors and their volunteer organizing committees, as well as the communities who put them on. Still, having 'always-on' media representative, and a press kit posted year round, has been cited several times as a reason that a race was included in an article when other events with similar followings – but no media presence outside of race weekend – may not have been.

- [Seneca7 – Official 2017 Media Guide](#)
- [Seneca7 – Official 2015 Media Guide](#)
- [Musselman Triathlon – Official 2016 Media Guide](#)
- [Musselman Triathlon – Official 2015 Media Guide](#)
- [Musselman Triathlon – Official 2014 Media Guide](#)
- [Musselman Triathlon – Spotlight Stories 2013](#)
- [Musselman Triathlon – International Triathlon Union Pan-American Cup Race 2008 – Backgrounder: Jarrod Shoemaker](#)
- [Team Mussel: A MusselStory – Musselman Triathlon 2012](#)



2008 Musselman Triathlon ITU Race
 Press Conference: Friday, July 11th 1 p.m.
 Race: Saturday, July 12th Men 2 p.m., Women 3 p.m.

Spotlight: Jarrod Shoemaker
 USA Olympic Triathlon Team, 2008

Jarrod Shoemaker, the first qualifier for the U.S. Olympic Team competing in Beijing, China, will compete at the Musselman in July. Jarrod, from Maynard, Mass., will contest the ITU Pan American Cup on Saturday, July 12, a little more than a month before he toes the line at the Olympic Games.

The 25-year-old qualified for the Games by finishing as the first American at the Beijing World Cup this past September. In doing so, he triumphed over some of the biggest names in the sport, including former Olympians Hunter Kempner and Andy Potts. Most Musselman followers will remember that Jarrod's sister, Jenna, finished 20th at the Musselman Pan American Cup in 2007.

Jarrod has a running background, competing at Nationals in high school and then for Dartmouth in college, where he contested the SK at NCAAs (personal best: 14:09) his senior year. Two months after graduation he entered his first triathlon, and his progression has been meteoric since then. In 2005 he won the Under-23 World Championships, and has been a member of the Elite National Team since 2006. With a much improved swim and consistency on the bike, Jarrod has two top-10 World Cup finishes and last July (on the same weekend as the Musselman) he took 6th at the Pan Am Games.

To view the official USA Triathlon bio, please visit <http://www.triathlon.org/media/profiles/jarrod-shoemaker.pdf>.

For more information, please contact:
 C. D. Henderson | Coordinator, Public Relations & Media | Musselman Triathlon
 Ph: 305-851-5975 Email: press@musselmantri.com



Fast Facts

Date of Birth: July 17, 1982
Hometown: Sudbury & Maynard, Mass
Height: 5'10" (1.77m)
Weight: 148 lbs (67 kg)
Coach: Tim Crowley
Sponsors: Nike, Hormel, Rolf Wheels, Team Psycho
Notes: Wife, Alicia Kaye, Professional Triathlete
 Sister, Jenna Shoemaker, Professional Triathlete (competed in Musselman ITU 2007)
Website: <http://www.jarrodshoemaker.com>

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PAGE 6 2010 Freshwater Trust Portland Triathlon Official Media Kit
 Media Contact: C. D. Henderson | 1-800-915-6960 | pr@portlandtri.com

Sponsors
 The Freshwater Trust Portland Triathlon thanks the following sponsors for their generous support:

- Oregon Sports Action
- Athlete's Lounge | Official Tri Shop
- Rolf Prima Wheel Systems
- Madison's Grill
- Recycle Racing
- Distillate Brewery | Exclusive Beer
- Staccato Gelato
- Skout Trailbar
- Bob's Red Mill
- R. W. Knudsen
- The Bike Gallery | Official Bike Support
- REI
- Hammer Nutrition | Official Nutrition

Supporters
 The following supporters help to make the Freshwater Trust Portland Triathlon possible:

- City of Portland
- Portland Parks Department
- Portland Tri Club
- Mayor Sam Adams
- Williamette Eventkeeper
- TriMet
- Oregon Ocean Paddling Society
- Travel Portland
- Hoodview Amateur Radio Club
- Portland Society for Calligraphy
- Columbia Crossing

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 Information for the Press | Musselman Triathlon

SPOTLIGHT STORIES...

**SETTING A GOAL AND SURPASSING IT...
 TRI-ING TO RAISE \$100K BY SUNDAY...**

Triathletes Kevin and Lindsay Morgan, of Rochester, are racing in honor of someone who, just weeks ago, was confined to his bed almost twenty-four hours a day: their uncle, Robert Morgan. In 1991 Mr. Morgan was paralyzed after being shot during a robbery at the fish market his grandparents owned.

"The fact that this man is paralyzed has not stopped him from accomplishing any of his goals, or from helping others," says Kevin Morgan. "His spirit is amazing. No matter how many competitors he is faced with, he is always positive. He has been a mentor, a motivator, and an inspiration to my brother, Kevin, and I."

The two set out to compete in triathlon in honor of their mentor, in part to raise funds for the Christopher & Dana Reeve Foundation, a charity that provides research on spinal cord injuries, to improve the lives of – and, hopefully, one day find a cure for – the competitors faced by Robert Morgan and many others.

"We really set out to raise \$50,000," says Kevin Morgan. "When we set that goal it seemed enormous, impossible. Our dream, however, became a reality. In less than three months we were able to raise \$85,021. We believe this is all a result made possible by our uncle, and the impact he has had on people's lives."

The two have set a new goal – \$100,000 – which they hope to meet, and exceed, at the Musselman Triathlon on July 11th.

While at the Musselman, the two are aiming to meet another goal: dropping twenty minutes off their previous year's times.

"It would be easy to say we want to raise some money and just finish the race," says Kevin Morgan, "but that wouldn't honor our uncle. He is not the type of person who simply tries to meet mediocrity; he strives for excellence. On Sunday, July 11th, so will we."

www.musselmantri.com/media

Read more about the Morgans:
www.teamreeveallstars.kintera.org/teammorgan

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON THESE OR ANY MUSSSEL STORIES...
 C. D. Henderson | Coordinator, Public Relations & Media
 Ph: 1-800-915-6960 Fax: 407-442-2790 Email: pr@musselmantri.com

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FAMILY MAN...
 FOURTEEN CHILDREN AND STILL TIME TO TRAIN... ANOTHER musselstory

When it comes to a large family, there's a good chance nobody has Mike Bucher, of Cleveland, OH beat: he and his wife have fourteen children. Add to that a large church family – Mike is the pastor at Calvary Chapel in Cleveland – and one might wonder when he finds time to train at all!

Mike's family consists of nine boys and five girls, from age three to age 24. His oldest was married June 12, 2010 and his first grandchild was recently delivered. Mike has his sights set on continuing to make triathlon a family affair when he is in his 60s, 70s, and even 80s. Mike spent many years coaching baseball his older children's baseball teams. He switched to triathlon because he can train with his kids.

"Five of my kids, from age fifteen to age nine, have done 'kids' triathlons," Mike says. "This year six of them will do a triathlon. It's fun to swim, bike, and run with them. Our kids are homeschooled, so triathlons end up fulfilling the physical education requirements."

"Being a pastor actually helps with training for triathlon, since I can listen to bible studies while I run and ride," says Mike. "I will get in five hours for each message I give on a Sunday or Wednesday service."

Mike started training for triathlons four years ago, at which time he made a four-year plan to do a full Iron-distance triathlon. He began with a sprint three years ago, moved to an Olympic-distance a year later, and completed a half – the same distance as the Musselman – in 2010. This year his training calendar is filled with the Musselman and an Iron-distance race later in the season.

"This reason I made it a four-year plan is because I don't just want to finish," Mike says. "I want to race it in a respectable time. My goal is health, but the races use my own ego to motivate me – and keep me on a planned schedule."

Mike admits that Cleveland winters test his resolve, as he's grown tired of swimming laps in the pool, preferring open-water swims in Lake Erie.

One of the reasons Mike chose the Woodports Musselman Triathlon is because of his church's close connection with the Calvary Chapel in the Finger Lakes. He's also come to spend time with his oldest daughter. "She's getting married to a guy from the Finger Lakes area in October," he says. "I chose this race so she could come with me and we could prepare for where she will live after the wedding."

In a world where many parents use parenting as a reason for not exercising, Mike has instead made training for triathlon a family affair. Mike takes particular pride in the fact that he has inspired many in the church to "get off the couch" and start exercising.

"Triathlon training actually adds to my life and family, instead of taking away from it."

Musselman Triathlon Spotlight Stories

2008 Musselman Triathlon ITU Race
 Press Conference: Friday, July 11th 1 p.m.
 Race: Saturday, July 12th Men 2 p.m., Women 3 p.m.

Spotlight: The Elites
 Some of The Men and Women of the Musselman ITU

Matthew Wisthoff
 New to the professional scene, Matthew Wisthoff comes to Geneva with something to prove. Already named the top elite male at the Twenty 12 Talent ID Invitational in Tuscaloosa, Alabama, this will be Wisthoff's first ITU Series race. Professionals like Wisthoff use races like the Musselman Triathlon ITU to build their racing resumes and, in turn, attract sponsors.

Last year Wisthoff was named a USAT All-American, eighth overall among males in the 20-24 age group. He also was third among elites in the North Carolina Triathlon Series. This year he hopes to add something new to his racing resume: a top finish at the Musselman ITU Race.

Fast Facts
Hometown: Wilmington, NC
Sponsors: Kestrel Bicycles; Aquaman Wetsuits; Bike Cycles
Employer: SetUp Events, Inc.

Accomplishments
 Maryland Swimming Open Water Swimmer of the Year; UNCW Varsity Swimmer '03 – '07.

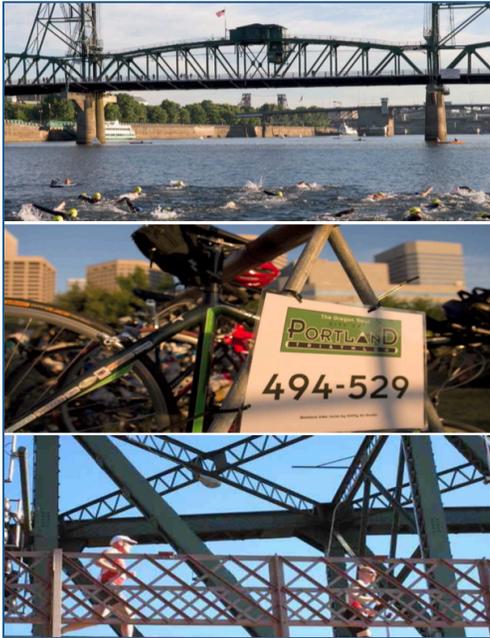
www.musselmantri.com/races/itu.html

Musselman ITU Prize Purse: \$20K!
 When dozens of professional triathletes converge on Geneva on July 12 they'll be competing for more than just glory: over \$20,000 in cash is on the line. With a top prize of up to \$4,500, a win at the Musselman adds to any professional's annual winnings. In a sport requiring travel around the world, in which competition for sponsorships can be fierce, cash prizes sometimes finance the season.

	Women	Men	Speedo Bonus
Champion	\$3,000	\$3,000	\$1,500
Second Place	\$2,500	\$2,500	\$750
Third Place	\$1,800	\$1,800	\$250
Fourth Place	\$1,500	\$1,500	
Fifth Place	\$1,200	\$1,200	

For more information, please contact:
 C. D. Henderson | Coordinator, Public Relations & Media | Musselman Triathlon
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SPOTLIGHT STORIES...

TRI-ING TO LOSE WEIGHT...

Chidy Guyette, 51, of Elmira, NY, attended the Musselman Triathlon in 2008 to cheer on her son, Tom Guyette, and his wife, Jill. Guyette had struggled with weight since having her first child and, while her children had participated in football, baseball, wrestling, volleyball, and cheerleading growing up, Guyette had always been content to be a spectator, never participating in athletic activities.

In January of 2008 Guyette began to eye weight loss as a goal. She enrolled in a program called *I Lost It At the Gym* in Elmira and, after weeks of exercise and nutrition classes, had lost 20 lbs.

"It was a great program. I was on my way to becoming a 'fitter' person," Guyette says. "But then the summer hit. I was not going to the gym as often, and the pounds were finding their way back..."

Guyette attended Musselman '08 as a spectator, cheering on son Thomas, an Exercise Physiologist at Corning Health Works.

"When I came to the event to support Tom and Jill, my own ideas started to develop," says Guyette. "I thought maybe, if I continued to work out and lost more weight, I could do a triathlon, too. I mentioned it to my kids, and on my fifty-first birthday, I received a block – my first encouragement."

"In September I decided that I needed to get serious," remembers Guyette. "Maybe, if I had an event to train for, it would help in losing weight and becoming fit. Maybe, just maybe, I would be able to compete in the mini-Mussel."

Guyette says she had never run more than one minute at a time and, upon trying swimming, found that she really didn't know how to do it tri-style – even though she'd been in the water all of her life.

"I joined Weight Watchers® in October to help with my weight, and continued to go to the gym and work out on the treadmill," she says. "I attended cardio and circuit classes at least four times a week – more if I could – and I've now lost more than 40 lbs. I am amazed at some muscles that have appeared, and my energy level is higher than ever!"

Guyette admits that there have been moments where she questioned her abilities and almost gave up.

"I began to go to the high school to swim in the winter months, and I soon realized that my biggest struggle would be swimming. I was ready to give up on completing this triathlon when a friend of my son's offered to help me. She left me feeling again like this may be possible – and she was determined to get me there."

"To be honest with you, with a little over a month to finish training, I still sometimes think that I may not be able to finish the triathlon, but then there is always somebody out there that encourages me again, and makes me believe I can do this," she says. "This has been a wonderful journey. The support I have had from my family and friends has been amazing – although I've always been very lucky there. From my friend, Carol, who gets up and goes to the gym with me at 5:30 in the morning, to my niece who has gone with me to the pool at 6 a.m., and my now friend, Chelene, who has the challenge of teaching me how to swim – and, of course, my husband who has been patient and encouraging throughout – I thank them all. I'm now striving to complete this triathlon not just for me, but for them, as well."

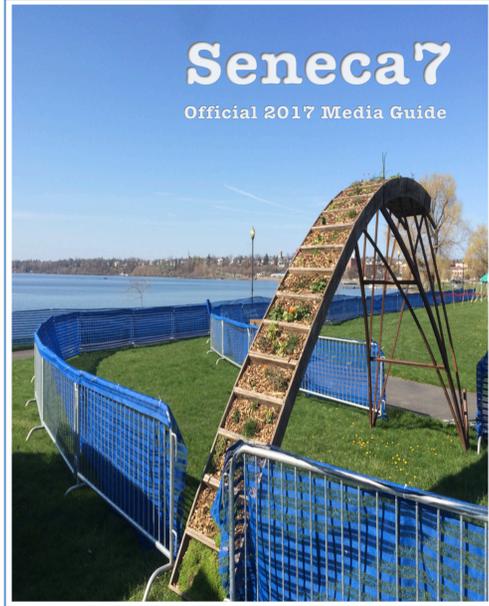
CONTINUED NEXT PAGE...



Seneca7

Official 2017 Media Guide

OFFICIAL MEDIA GUIDE 2016



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TRAINING THROUGH PAIN

MEXICO STUDENT BATTLES BROKEN BONES TO MUSSEL... ..ANOTHER musselstory



Most triathletes would give anything to be sixteen years old again – to regain the stamina of youth, so important to a training-intensive sport. For Mexico, NY high school student Dan Jardins, however, sixteen wasn't much of a year for training...

"March 22, 2009 seemed like any other day," says Jardins. "I had an indoor soccer game in Adirondacksville. I had no idea it would be the turning point of my sixteen years..."

"The day before one of my teachers had found out I was training for triathlons on a mountain bike," remembers Jardins. "Her husband had been a semi-pro cyclist, and his father, too, and she told me that, between them, they might have a road bike I could use. I was excited!"

Less than halfway into the game Jardins, playing defense, charged hard at an opposing player; both kicked the ball at the same time. What happened next is a blur: it ended in his laying on the field, getting up, stepping forward, and listening to his shin crack as he fell back to the ground.

"My leg was freely spinning in circles," Jardins remembers. "9-1-1 was called, and the EMTs that responded put me on a stretcher. I asked them if my leg was broken, and I expected some sort of reassurance statement, a let-wait-and-see type of response. Instead, the EMT looked me directly in the eyes and said, simply, yes..."

Jardins recalls that, upon hearing of his broken leg, many of his friends' first questions were the same: *did you cry?*

"My ribs and fibula were completely snapped in half, and the pain was excruciating," Jardins says. "So, that wasn't the part that made me cry. The first thing that came into my mind was that I'd just been offered a racing bike to train for triathlons – and, now, I wouldn't be doing any training at all."

The next few hours were arguably the most difficult of Jardins' life. He remembers arriving in the emergency room at Upstate Hospital in apnea; asking for and being given increasing dosage of pain medication; and being put under so that his leg could be set, and then reset, in surgery.

"It was screaming!" says Jardins. "This was by far the worst pain I had ever been through. Doctors and nurses were holding me down, and I woke up to hear myself screaming in pain. Each time I would wake up they would give me more medication. Eventually they told me they couldn't give me any more medication..."

Jardins would spend the night trying to sleep. And sleeping very little.

"When I finally woke up from surgery the first thing I did was ask my mother to text my friend, Mike. I needed to let him know that I wouldn't be able to swim year-round or run track with him, like we had planned. There were three rods hammered into my leg; two were hammered on top of my leg into my tibia and one was hammered through my ankle."

Come watch one huge paint-by-number Friday, July 9th from 10 a.m. – 4 p.m., contact C. D. Henderson for directions.

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Media Contact: C. D. Henderson | 1-800-915-6960 | pr@musselmantri.com

IF AT FIRST YOU DON'T SUCCEED...

TRI, TRI AGAIN... ..ANOTHER musselstory

Austin Clark, age 14, will compete in the mini-Mussel this year, his first sprint-distance race – following two "kids races" which, he says, wound up not being triathlons at all.

"Two summers ago I did a kids triathlon in Cicero, NY – part of the TriAmerica Syracuse – but the run got canceled due to a severe thunderstorm," says Clark. "Last summer I did the Keuka Lake Triathlon – but the swim portion of the kids' race was turned into a run since the water was too cold and several adults were treated by EMS because of the temperature."

Clark is currently training for the Musselman, as well as the Empire State Games triathlon, and is eager to complete a full triathlon, and says he's hopeful that the third time will be the charm.

"I'm looking forward to racing in the sprint triathlon," he says. "I think it will be challenging, and I can't wait to see how my new bike handles in a race situation."

Come watch one huge paint-by-number Friday, July 9th from 10 a.m. – 4 p.m., contact C. D. Henderson for directions.

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ALMOST THERE: After two almost triathlons, Austin Clark hopes to finish in 2010.



Writing Samples

Spotlight Stories

I specialize in storytelling. I've developed media guides for multisport and running events for more than a decade. With thousands of participants over the years it's easy to forget that each athlete has their own story to tell. I seek out these stories, and do my best to turn them into press-ready material that will attract journalistic interest.

I've compiled some of my favorite stories into the collection, below. Each opens in a separate PDF.

- [“Trade A Tango For A Triathlon?”](#) written for the Musselman Triathlon, 2008
- [“From Obese to Inspiration”](#) written for the Musselman Triathlon, 2010
- [“Heaven’s Angels”](#) written for the Finger Lakes Times & Musselman Triathlon, 2009
- [“Cpl. Schneider and the ‘Freedom Team’”](#) written for the Seneca7, 2013
- [“From Incarceration to Inspiration: A Musselstory”](#) written for the Musselman Triathlon, 2012



Press Releases

I've written dozens of press releases over the years. The release that appears first in the list below was reprinted in, or adapted for, dozens of websites across the country, and some internationally, as well. (Seeing it translated into Italian was pretty neat). Feel free to check out the releases below as but a few examples of my work.

- [“Musselman Triathlon Featured in National Spotlight”](#) April 21, 2008
- [“Musselman ITU Race the Perfect Practice for Beijing”](#) July 12, 2008
- [“Musselman Triathlon Named Top Race by Triathlon Business International”](#) January 31, 2016
- [“Seneca7 Fills To Capacity in just 45 Minutes”](#) October 31, 2016
- [“Seneca7 Contested Sunday”](#) April 30, 2017



“Trade a Tango for a Triathlon?”

TRADE A TANGO FOR A TRIATHLON?

WRITTEN BY CHRISTOPHER HENDERSON FOR THE MUSSELMAN TRIATHLON, 2008

When race director Jeff Henderson walked into a Musselman Triathlon organizational committee meeting in early 2004, he brought with him the usual list of concerns to be dealt with and decided on: race course improvements... schedule adjustments... new volunteers. Only this time there was something new...

“I received an email from someone who recently registered,” Henderson said. “She wants to know if – and I’m not joking here – she can wear ‘floaties’ during the swim.”

That participant was Pittsford resident Cindy Devore. She’d registered for the mini-Mussel as part of an agreement with her husband, Carl: she wanted to ballroom dance; he wanted to do triathlon.

“He did, so I did,” she says. “I think he had the easier conquest, personally.”

Devore’s difficulty was a fear of the water that she obtained as a four year-old, following a near-drowning experience. She’d gone years without facing that fear; when her husband agreed to do the hustle if she’d Mussel, she knew she had to do something she’d put off a long time: learn to swim. And, be comfortable swimming in open water. Quickly.

She began by writing her initial email to Henderson; he replied by informing her that USA Triathlon prohibits the use of personal floatation devices – or “floaties” – in sanctioned races.

Devore was undeterred, and sent off a second email.

“I explained that the word triathlon and the name Cindy Devore would never be used in the same sentence, were it not that I was married to Carl Devore. What I do for love!” she remembers. “I told Jeff that I do not like to swim. I do not like the thought of swimmy things nibbling at my legs. I was fearful of being out in a lake alone and unable to put my feet down on solid earth. I told Jeff normally I swim to avoid drowning, run to evade danger, and bike best on the back of my tandem with my husband hauling my butt across town.”



In short, Devore was apprehensive. Henderson, she recalls, was not.

“He said he knew I could do the triathlon, and encouraged me to buy a good quality wetsuit. He assured me if I did, I would “bob like a cork” in the water,” she says. “He told me there would be people in kayaks and on jet skis looking out for anyone in trouble, and confidently told me, again, that I could do this.”

It was Henderson’s words that helped Devore make her decision.

“I realized that a young man – young enough to be my son – who had never met me, had more confidence in me than I had in myself. I was long overdue for a belief-in-myself-check,” she says. “So, I began the process of training for my first triathlon.”

Devore began by reading. A lot.

“Many books on training for marathons and triathlons sat on my nightstand,” she says. “I read each one, picturing myself floating effortlessly in the water, riding with strong shoulders on a bike, running fast and strong. Copies of Triathlon Magazine and Inside Triathlon began to pile on the floor by my bed. I am a good reader and a greater positive thinker, able to envision myself alongside professionals.”

But first, she’d have to start with the basics; she hadn’t yet even gotten into the water.

“The simple act of learning to swim was a terrifying experience,” recalls Devore. “It began with me simply standing in the shallow end, holding on to the edge of the pool, trying to put my face in the water. I had to adjust to tolerating the bubbles. They were killers. I felt sick each time I swallowed dirty, chlorinated water, from my efforts to try and figure out how to breathe in synchrony with a stroke like the picture of the lady in the book,” she remember.

Devore had help from local triathlete and Musselman champion '04 Mary Eggers. Eggers provided the coaching Devore needed to gain confidence – little by little.

“I looked ridiculous swimming in my wetsuit in an 83 degree room with 80 degree water, but it was the only way I could ultimately get over my fear of going into the deep end without a floatie,” Devore says. “Kids would come up and ask me why I was dressed like I was, and then swim off like fish. I just kept my focus that at least I was in the water swimming.”

It would take Devore several years to forgo the wetsuit.



“I had trouble learning to coordinate my breathing and finally followed Mary's suggestion to breathe to one side on every stroke, because I never felt like I was getting enough air. I forced myself to let go of the side of the pool and head into the deep end using a kick board.”

She'd done it... almost.

Recognizing that triathlon is a multisport event – a swim, a bike, and a run – Devore had to simultaneously train for the other two portions of the race, as well.

“The biking training was a little easier, but only because I was able to breathe oxygen without getting a mouthful of water,” Devore jokes. “Uphills resulted in amazing quadriceps burning... downhill scared me to death... wet roads made me uneasy... and zooming traffic that came too close for comfort? Terrifying.”

Devore remembers finding motivation in the triumphs of the Tour de France champion that year.

“I loved the flats where I felt like Lance Armstrong whizzing past the mountains in the background,” she says. “But in reality, most of the time, biking felt uphill in both directions.”

The run wasn't a cakewalk, either. Following surgery for a foot injury earlier, Devore had become an avid walker.

“My doctor told me what everyone hears following surgery: walking is better than running, swimming is better than walking,” she says. “We all know why swimming wasn't my first choice, so I became a fairly fast walker.”

Running, however, was a different story. Devore had to balance her training with care, making sure that nothing exacerbated her injury and prevented her from accompanying her husband as he held up his part of the bargain: ballroom dance. Carl Devore stood by his wife – or, more accurately, swam by, cycled by, and ran by her – every step of the way.

“I dreaded each time my husband cheerfully asked, “So, how would you like to do a swim today?” “Like?” I would respond incredulously? “Like?” For Devore, there was no like – it was a necessity. Her husband understood.

During bike training, she remembers her husband dutifully riding behind her. “There I was, gasping for air, while my husband pedaled effortlessly behind me, whistling Beethoven, asking me between movements, “How's it going?” “Going?” I would think? Am I actually moving? It felt like a standstill.” Her husband understood.

Carl was so understanding that he decided to drop out of the half-Iron he'd signed up for, exchanging his registration for one in the mini-Mussel, so that he could race next to his wife.



Devore remembers her reliance on Jeff Henderson, as well. He, also, understood what she was going through.

“I would drop Jeff a note as I did the first time and, for some inexplicable reason, he would write me back amidst all the other things he had to do, and he would encourage me to keep plugging.” Devore remembers growing more and more apprehensive as her first race grew near. “I needed Jeff,” she says. “I wrote Jeff and told him I was still plugging, but barely, and sought his reassurance.”

“Pluggers become finishers and finishers will someday rule the world,” Henderson would tell Devore in one of his many emails.

And that would become her mantra. And on the first mini-Mussel ever, Devore became a finisher. She had a little help from Carl – and no help from “floaties.”

Carl, in fact, raced in the ‘novice’, or beginner, heat, staying with his wife during the swim, even dropping back a bit to swim next to her when a tinge of self-doubt set in. Staying close during the bike, the two finished the run as a pair, crossing the finish line side by side, to the call of the announcer: “And here come Carl and Cindy Devore. This is Cindy’s first triathlon, and she is now a Musselman!”

Not bad for a woman who, not very much earlier, was afraid to do a dance with the water.

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“From Obese to Inspiration”

FROM OBESE TO INSPIRATION: A MUSSELSTORY
WRITTEN BY CHRISTOPHER HENDERSON FOR THE MUSSELMAN TRIATHLON, 2010

Kevin Shaw, 44, of Binghamton, NY credits triathlon with a healthy new lifestyle – for himself, and for those he has inspired.

“Three years ago I was riding in the car and we passed a very large man riding a bike,” says Shaw. “I’d been known to tow my children around town in a trailer on the back of my bicycle. My youngest, Alexis, a little over two years old at the time, said ‘Dad... that man looks just like you riding your bike!’ I tried to take it to mean that he was on a bike but, after thinking it over, I realized she meant because his butt was hanging over the seat.” Shaw would file the comment away and continue his life, unaltered.

“A few weeks later my oldest daughter was watching one of those medical shows on the Discovery Channel. The topic was obesity, and they were interviewing a man who weighed more than 600lbs. My other daughter, Alexis, watched the television and then turned, carefully studying my midsection, before making an announcement: that I looked just like the man on television.

“I paid attention to the show. I didn’t look exactly like the guy on television, I thought, but I had gotten pretty flabby,” Shaw says.

It got him thinking.

“I had two data points, both from people close to me that weren’t old enough to apply filters to what they say. They were saying, simply: you need to get in shape,” he says. “At 41 years of age I decided I needed to take some action.”

Shaw located the digital scale and stepped onto it. It read 320 lbs.

“I knew, then, that I needed a big goal that would keep me motivated and take long enough to force a complete lifestyle change.”

That January Shaw signed up for an Olympic distance triathlon in Vermont.



“I didn’t know how to swim, and only had a mountain bike; the whole triathlon experience seemed completely unattainable,” he remembers. Shaw joined the YMCA and bought a Total Immersion book and DVD and began teaching himself to swim.

“It was very disheartening,” he says. “I couldn’t swim one length of the pool. I kept at it, doing the balance drills. I ran outside. I felt like I should be losing weight, but every time I stepped onto the scale it kept saying 320. I finally realized that I must have been way over 320, and the scale’s max must have been 320 lbs. It wouldn’t read lower until I went lower – life is not fair.”

After three weeks the scale read 319, and Shaw was on his way. Down to 270 by the first triathlon, it was go time.

“I felt sick the morning of the race. At 2:00 a.m. I walked to a gas station and bought a roll of Tums and a roll of Roloids. I ate most of them and felt a little better. I slept from 3 to 5 and then headed to the park for the race. In retrospect, I should have bagged it,” Shaw says. “My mother had traveled with us from New York, though. And I really wanted to prove to my kids that you can do whatever it is you set your mind to.”

“My legs were already cramping by the time I finished the swim,” Shaw remembers. “As I was doing the second loop on the bike I made the decision to pack it in after the bike leg, to call it a day. I was physically and mentally defeated. As I was coming into the bike finish my family was there with their home-made posters of swimmers, bikers, and runners. I started to cry. They were all standing by the fence in the transition area, going crazy, and my wife enthusiastically reminded me that I was two-thirds of the way there.”

Shaw had to keep going.

“I was determined to finish, even if I had to walk the entire six miles.”

As Shaw walked onto the run course his six year-old – the same who had spurred his new-found fitness with a comparison to a morbidly obese patient on the Discovery Channel – saw fit to point out all of the people who had already finished the run. Still, Shaw was undeterred.

“I ran the first mile, but was forced to begin walking,” Shaw remembers. “As I was walking this triathlete ran up behind me, put his arm around me and – I will never forget this – asked me ‘How ya doin’, brother?’” The man would walk with Shaw for a few minutes, offering encouragement, before continuing on. Shaw, with the encouragement of his daughters, wife, mother, and a complete stranger, would finish the race.

“I was third from last, and last in my age group,” he says. “Yet I felt victorious for some reason.”

In September 2007 Shaw’s father – ‘Dashing Don’ Shaw, a former racecar driver, died. This caused his older sister, Mary, to go into “a bit of a funk,” he says – starting with gaining weight and getting down on herself.



“This past Christmas she made a comment that she wished I could be her personal trainer. My initial thought was ‘what the hell do I know about personal training’ – why me?” Shaw says. “My wife pointed out that my sisters and many others find me motivational.”

Shaw would respond by starting an email distribution of what was going on with him and his extended family. He named it ‘Friends and Family of Dashing Don’s Race Team’. His oldest sister began running and attended a boot camp; she and her daughter participated in a marathon in Las Vegas. Mary, who had been in the ‘funk’, began working out and running three times a week – and has lost nearly forty pounds. Shaw’s youngest sister has entered several road races and has become an ‘exercise fanatic’; even his oldest daughter has gotten into the act, losing six pounds and getting in shape.

“I am absolutely thrilled with the progress my family and friends have made in their lives,” Shaw says. “I never thought of myself as a role model for healthy living, but I am okay with this role. I prefer this to the role of overweight bike rider or the obese man on Discovery.”

Shaw, who is down to 202 lbs, is signed up for the Musselman half-Iron, and will race his first full Iron-distance race in September.

An entirely new lifestyle – brought on through the eyes of two little girls who didn’t know any better than to tell it as they saw it – and fueled by triathlon.

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“Heaven’s Angels...”

**CHRISTIAN MOTORCYCLISTS A BLESSING TO MUSSELMAN ORGANIZERS
WRITTEN BY CHRISTOPHER HENDERSON FOR THE MUSSELMAN TRIATHLON, 2009
*SPECIAL TO THE FINGER LAKES TIMES***

You’re at a stoplight, patiently waiting for the light to turn green.

Even before you see them, you feel it. The distant, throaty rumbling can only be one thing: Motorcycles. Lots and lots of motorcycles.

Before you know it, you’re surrounded by men and women clad in leather.

The light turns green, and they roar away just as you check to make sure your doors are locked. Admit it: you probably weren’t thinking that you’ve just been passed by a dedicated group of faith-based volunteers.

But if you’ve just had a run-in with the Christian Motorcycle Association, that is exactly the case.

Since the inaugural race in 2004, members of the CMA Syracuse chapter, Central New York Sunrise Riders 429, have taken to the roads each Musselman morning, providing road support to race organizers. Many race officials and marshals will hitch a ride with a CMA member before the day is through.

The CMA boasts thousands of members, with hundreds of chapters across the country. According to the organization’s Web site, each member “must agree to live and act under Biblical principles of conduct.”

“The basic purpose of a CMA Chapter is to support the National CMA effort of sharing and showing the love of Jesus Christ to motorcyclists, and supporting the overall ministry of CMA,” the Web site says.

Many volunteer their time and hardware to organizations such as the Musselman.



John Austin, race director of the Cazenovia Triathlon and an official at the Musselman since its inception, has come to know the CMA volunteers well.

“These are really, really good people,” Austin says. “They make communication so much easier. They really help make these races go smoothly.”

Austin remembers his first encounter with a CMA rider. Approaching the man on the motorcycle and unsure where to assign him, he asked the rider a question: Where can I use you?

“His answer made me think,” Austin said. “He told me, simply, ‘We’re here to serve.’” Austin found several places for the motorcyclist to help, but the man’s response left him thinking.

“He may have meant that two ways,” Austin said. “They’re like any other motorcycle club, but their purpose – wow.”

Al Desederio, coordinator of the Syracuse chapter, said his members get as much out of helping organizations as the organizations receive from their service.

“This race is a blessing, something we look forward to,” he said “We try to bring as many people as have the weekend off and help wherever we’re needed. We stay with them from start to finish, at their service.”

Desederio said members have become accustomed to handling road support for triathlons, but they look forward to the Musselman year after year.

“It’s a great race, with really great people,” he said. “It supplies a good rush of adrenaline. We’ve been with the race since the beginning, and I can easily see us in Geneva every summer for the next 20 years or more.”

Jan Regan, Musselman’s original run course coordinator, has used the CMA’s services in her duties as the race’s official photographer. Riding the course on a motorcycle gives her vantage points that would otherwise be unavailable, she said.

“I know this wonderful group does much more important things than what they do for me, but I will never forget having my own motorcyclist transport me all over the course so that I could get the photographs we needed to document the race,” Regan said.

Any qualms she had about hopping on a motorcycle were quickly put to rest.

“He would patiently stop wherever I asked,” she recalled. “And I’m pretty sure he was gauging his speed by my low tolerance for going too fast. It made photographing the bike course both doable and a lot of fun.”



Journalists covering the race have used CMA volunteers' services as well.

"This is a terrific group of men and women, and race day would be very difficult without their assistance," said race director Jeff Henderson. "From crowd control in the park to transporting race officials throughout the course, they're everywhere. They ride the course at the front of the pack, checking to make sure the roadway is clear of obstructions, and they handle the 'sweep' at the back end, making sure no stragglers are left behind."

Henderson is especially impressed that the group supports the race year-round.

"We have race committee meetings throughout the year, and without fail the Christian Motorcyclist Association attends," Henderson said.

"I've overheard athletes refer to them as the Heaven's Angels, and I have to agree," he said. "We hope to be blessed with their services for as long as there is a Musselman."

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'HEAVEN'S ANGELS'



Jan Regan

A member of the Christian Motorcyclist Association is ready to escort a race official onto the bike course during last year's Musselman. The group has volunteered at the event since 2004.

CHRISTIAN
MOTORCYCLISTS
A BLESSING TO
TRIATHLON
ORGANIZERS

By **C.D. HENDERSON**
PUBLIC RELATIONS COORDINATOR
FOR THE MUSSELMAN TRIATHLON

You're at a stoplight, patiently waiting for the light to turn green.

Even before you see them, you feel it. The distant, throaty rumbling can only be one thing: Motorcycles. Lots and lots of motorcycles.

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■ See ANGELS on Page 4A

Inside

◆ The Pan American Cup has been canceled this year due to a lack of funding.

◆ Seven women join forces to tackle the sprint triathlon as a team they've dubbed "Heart, Wine & Soul."

Tomorrow

◆ A preview of the first ever "Musselman Arts Triathlon," featuring performances by musicians, dancers and painters.

◆ Geneva Bicycle Center owner Jim Hogan's role as bike course coordinator.

◆ One local competitor picked up some tips when he housed USA Elite triathlete Victor Plata two years ago.

Friday

◆ The growing popularity of the mini-Mussel and its Novice Wave.

Sunday, Monday & Tuesday

◆ Full race coverage and results.



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“Cpl. Schneider & The Freedom Team”

TEAM SPOTLIGHT: CPL. KYLE SCHNEIDER & THE ‘FREEDOM TEAM’ WRITTEN BY CHRISTOPHER HENDERSON FOR THE SENECA7

For one Seneca7 team, the race will be filled with challenge, reward – and symbolism.

The ‘Freedom Team’ consists of family and friends of Cpl. Kyle Schneider, a Baldwinsville-area Marine who was killed in Afghanistan June 30, 2011.

“Kyle loved to run,” says his mother, Lorie Schneider. “He ran track in high school. When he was stationed in Washington, DC he would run to the National Mall to see the sunrise, and take runs around Arlington to pay respect to those brave men and women who gave all.”

Kyle’s annual visits home always included a special trip around Seneca Lake, she recalls.

“He loved Seneca Lake. The beauty of it – our family drives around it filled with laughter and fun, lunches at restaurants, fishing trips with his Dad and brother, watching sunsets – Seneca Lake was one of his favorite places.”

“Shortly after Kyle's Angel date we decided that we had to carry on his mission for him, to continue to help his fellow Military brothers, community and country,” Kyle’s mother remembers. “We knew that we had to do something that he so loved: running. We decided to create the Cpl. Kyle R. Schneider Foundation and the Freedom Team.”

A foundation was born.

The first function for the Freedom Team was the Festival of Races in Syracuse on September 30, 2012. Lorie Schneider walked the 3K, while local Marines, as well as Marines from Kyle’s unit, ran the 5K. They were joined by friends, family and community members who did either the 5K run or 3K walk to honor and remember Kyle.

Kyle’s parents and family goal is to keep their son’s name alive – and to help someone everyday in his honor and memory.



“The Freedom Team consists of anyone who has the desire to run any race at any level, and while doing so honor and remember Kyle and also those brothers/sisters in arms that have fought and died for our freedom,” Kathy explains. “Let them never be forgotten!”

When Kathy heard about the Seneca7 she knew it was a race the Freedom Team needed to do. She began training, determined to make up one part of the seven-member team that would run 77 miles, encircling Seneca Lake, in her son’s memory.

“I have never run before,” Kathy admits. “I am not even sure if I enjoy it, to be honest. But something deep in my heart knew it was something I must do. Create a team to run this race for him, and also become a part of the team.”

In December Kathy joined a local half marathon running group in the hopes of preparing for the run. She quickly realized the ability level of other members surpassed her own, so she started reading books about running, and running on her own.

“Kyle is with me every run. My goal was just running one mile without stopping, and I did it. Kyle could run fast, and for ten miles easily at a time, so I am inspired to try to do so, too.”

Kathy admits to trepidation about her own preparations for the race.

“I’m not sure if I will ever run fast, but there are Freedom Team members that can and do. In October 2012, one ran the Marine Corps Marathon in Kyle’s honor. It started and ended near Arlington where Kyle is now laid to rest.”

That man will make up one-seventh of the Seneca7 Freedom Team – and Kathy is determined to be ready for the race, as well.

“When I run for Kyle, I run with a purpose,” she says. “I feel his passion for running, and his passion for his country. I run with my heart filled with love, respect, appreciation, gratefulness and sorrow for my brave beloved son, who laid his life down for his country, his brothers in arms and his family, and for all those that have sacrificed for freedom. We are home of the free because of our brave. The other members of the Freedom Team express to me that running in memory of Kyle gives them a feeling that they know that they will finish because they will have an Angel with them.

That the backdrop will be one of her son’s favorite places only makes the experience sweeter.

“We will run around Seneca Lake. A lake with so many beautiful memories. Memories of a family, memories of a boy who became a Marine, of a man who so loved his country that he gave his life for freedom. Kyle will be smiling down on us as we take every step. This race is for him; every step, every breath, every beautiful sight we see, every pain that we will feel, every struggle that we will encounter, every smile, every cheer. This is for Kyle.”



“As I run the Seneca7, because of our family's connection to this lake, I will run with tears,” she says. “Tears of joy of being the one chosen to be called his 'Mama.' Tears of pride. Tears of memories of laughter and fun. And tears of sorrow: sorrow for the wedding and grandchildren that will not be; sorrow of the hugs and laughter I so miss; and sorrow for the runs that Kyle will only have now through me.”

“The Seneca7 is a journey with a purpose for the Freedom Team,” she says. “Seneca Lake is our lake. We may place last, but no matter where we finish, this race is ours, and in our hearts we will have the heart to finish with an Angel beside us

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“Turning Incarceration Into Inspiration”

TURNING INCARCERATION INTO INSPIRATION: A MUSSELSTORY WRITTEN BY CHRISTOPHER HENDERSON FOR THE MUSSELMAN TRIATHLON, 2012

Many triathletes use triathlon to stay healthy. William Perrine, 48, of Stewart Manor, NY uses multisport racing to do much more.

"In the end of 2007 I was a drug addicted, alcoholic, cigarette chain-smoking shell of my former self," remembers Perrine. "I had just finished a jail sentence and was up to my old tricks again - not because I wanted to be, but because it had become what I knew. What I knew was, basically, hopelessness."

"In June of 2008 I knew it would be prison - or worse - and I finally got help. After getting cleaned up I met a girl - Lynn, who I am still with today.

"Lynn started triathlon in 2003 here on Long Island, and had done IM Lake Placid by 2006. She had stopped drinking at 26 and quit smoking in 2002. I watched her run the NYC marathon in 2009, right after we started dating, and I was inspired! The next month, on Christmas Eve, I quit smoking, too.

"So at some point Lynn said, "Now you can sign up for a road race." To which I replied that I couldn't run a mile!"

Lynn was forceful - she told Perrine he had until that May to train, and that he would need to be able to run for an hour by then.

"I started training. I did run/walks until I could run an hour," Perrine recalls. "I did my first 10k that May on Long Island." "Now," Lynn told him, "we can sign you up for a sprint triathlon. You have until August to get ready." "I did that pool triathlon and thought I would die," Perrine admits. "But I was hooked!"



"I have not YET done a full distance Ironman," says Perrine. "But I have done handfuls of sprints, a half dozen Olympic-distance races, and now a half-Iron."

This year Perrine's race calendar is filled. In addition to the Musselman Triathlon he will compete in an Olympic- distance triathlon in Wilkes-Barre, PA, and several sprint triathlons in the greater New York City area. He'll cap the season with the New York City Marathon in November.

"Along with getting sober, triathlon and road racing have absolutely turned my life around," says Perrine. "I enjoy life now. I travel to beautiful places to swim, bike and run, and I feel a spiritual connection to our world that I had otherwise lost. The outpouring of support in the communities that host these special events, the comraderie of the racers, and the unbelievable feeling that you are *really living* - not just existing - keeps me coming back even through injury or set backs."

"It is a journey full of learning," Perrine admits. "I used to feel I would die on the street somewhere down the line. Now I feel I will be fit right up until I am old enough to do triathlons."

The sport, Perrine says, has transformed his life.

"I can work alongside the young bucks again," Perrine, an electrician by trade, says. "I am part of the world and be kind to others again. And that girl who started this, Lynn, is my training partner, racing partner, life partner, and best friend. We shall continue to live, love - and swim, bike and run! And, who knows - maybe even get married!"

Perrine admits he hesitates to share his addicted-to-tri-addict story with others. "I realize if I tell the truth, people may be turned off. I share my story because maybe, instead, someone can be inspired."

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“A Little Bit of History...”

A LITTLE BIT OF HISTORY TROJANYACHT.COM | AUGUST 2016

It's ironic that the very boat I purchased in 2016 is almost certainly one that I admired - and dreamed of owning - as a child riding shotgun in my father's motorboat in the 1980s.

I remember evening rides to Barrett Marine to gas up his 1960s-era Arkansas Traveler. We'd putter the two-or-so miles to the canal, motoring past the state park marina with its sailboats and its cabin cruisers that, to a little boy, may as well have been superyachts.

My brother, always a fan of going fast, would marvel at the sparkly speedboats, which were very popular on the lake at the time. I'd have my eye on something else: big, slow boats - anything with a cabin, really. You see, to me, the idea of ever getting off the boat was, frankly, off-putting - I wanted nothing more than to stay out on the water forever. Hoisting the boat upon our return to the cottage would be the saddest part of the day for me. You're telling me some people have both a boat and a home? I'd watch the Chris-Crafts and the Carvers motor past and wonder why anyone would want anything else.

What a sight we must have been, my whole family packed into a small, decrepit motorboat, seemingly from yesteryear. I was probably only six or seven years old, but even then I understood that class distinctions could be made out on the lake, just as everywhere else. Some people had brand new houseboats, while others were lucky to be in rickety rowboats with antique motors. We were at the lower end of the boating chain. When we were out on the lake waterskiing, or jumping waves on busier days, it was easy to forget this; on trips into the marina to get gas, however, our status suddenly became clear.

I remember looking up at the boating elite, sitting up on the decks of their yachts sunning themselves. I wondered if they were looking down at us, judging us. I also wondered if they could sense my envy.

"The reason so many of them are in the marina is because after you've spent that much money on a boat, you don't have the money for the gas to go anywhere," my grandfather would quip. It didn't do much to curb my jealousy... even in the marina, these people were still waking up on a boat! Why couldn't that be us?



I remember reminding myself that my family was fortunate to have a cottage. Sure it was old – older than my father's boat, even. And sure, it was in pretty decrepit condition: no insulation, old wiring, and no toilet facility. My father had told us what some of the boats in the marina cost – and there were a few that might be worth more than our cottage! He tried to explain depreciation to me, but I was too little to understand.

Thirty years later depreciation is what has provided me with the opportunity to own a piece of history – and, quite possibly, a piece of my own history, as well. My 'new' summer home is a 1977 Trojan F36 Tri-Cabin. I've been told that it spent the earliest part of its life in Waterloo, New York, docked at Barrett Marine – the very marina in which I, as a little boy, would stare at houseboats and cabin cruisers and dream.

I remember a few boats with benches on the bow. That had looked so cool – my father's boat barely had enough seats for the four of us, and they were old and uncomfortable – at least two of the seats pinched your bottom with every wave the boat hit. For a pleasureboat, there certainly was a lot of pain! I remember looking at the these yachts with their comfortable, cushioned benches molded right into their fiberglass decks, wondering what it must feel like to lounge up there.

I remember one in particular because on it sat three young girls not much older than my brother and I. I remember looking up and waving as we passed, as people out on the water often do. The girls did not wave back. Instead, one made a disparaging remark about our boat, and they all giggled. Snobbery at its finest...

My 'new' boat has just such a bench. It is quite comfortable. I looked at it during the walk-through and couldn't help but wonder if this was the same boat I'd been insulted from decades before...

My grandfather had the foresight to purchase lakefront land when it was cheap in the 1940s. His friends made fun of him, even calling it "Dick's Folly", in part because the land he bought had nothing more than a dusty old dirt road leading to it. He built a boathouse for his sailboat before he left for the war, and added a kitchen and bedroom to it upon his return. When he died in the late 1980s some of his old friends approached my grandmother with offers to purchase it. She didn't sell it, telling people it would never leave our family.

My grandfather probably knew in the 1930s that lakefront land would be valuable one day, but that didn't matter – he, like me, just loved the water. Over the years his 1930s-era cottage, complete with tap water drawn from the lake and an outhouse on the hill, became a relic of sorts on the east side of Seneca Lake. Its presence in my life made me appreciate two things: the water, and classic, antique type stuff.

It turns out that my father wasn't wrong – the value of lakefront property increases from year to year, while the value of boats typically does not. Our summer cottage is worth much more in 2016 than it was in the 1980s. And my 1977 Trojan F36 Tri-Cabin, once a jewel of the marina, is likely nearing the end of its life.



Still, the moment I saw it on Craigslist I had a flashback to the 1980s. I saw myself in a boat, as a little boy, looking up from that Arkansas Traveler, dreaming of living on the water one day.

In a moment of clarity I told myself I had to own it.

Wave to me if you see me out on the lake - I promise to wave back.

Can't wait for y'all to come and visit...

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“Shakedown”

SHAKEDOWN TROJANYACHT.COM | SEPTEMBER 2016

As I spent time trying to decide on a name for the boat – I’d been waffling between ‘*Kind Of A Cottage*’ and ‘*Severance*’ – my friends had begun to refer to it by a moniker of their own: *Forever Docked*.

"He's never going to take it out," they'd whisper to each other. "It's going to be in the marina until the end of the season."

That would have been just fine with my mother. She, upon seeing the boat's size, had remarked that she couldn't see a reason why it would ever need to leave the dock.

"It's just like having a cottage on the water," she had said.

Still, after a lifetime of watching powerboats cruise past the dock at our *actual* cottage on the water, I wanted to do more than just stay in the marina.

I won't lie: I was nervous - this was a big boat, and represented the entirety of my recent severance payment, and then some. What if I crashed? I didn't know anything about this thing... how would it handle in the marina?

One full week into ownership my friend Bill had become increasingly discouraged, his urging to take the boat out growing in intensity as the hours went by. All weekend he'd begged me to go out – "the weather is perfect!" was his constant refrain. I kept reminding him that 1). I wouldn't be going out on busy days to start out, and 2). I was going to wait until I could find an experienced captain to come with me.

On Monday, August 8 he was minutes away from getting into his Jeep to head back to Syracuse when he decided to give it one last try. We'd talked to Mike, the owner of a Viking at the other end of our row of boats – nicknamed 'Mahogany Row', we'd been told. Mike had suggested that I just motor in and out of my slip until I was comfortable with the controls, and then try the canal, and later the lake.



"Today's the perfect day," Mike had told me several times, Bill nodding profusely each time.

When we returned to the boat, Bill was insistent.

"Dude, you heard what Mike said – today is perfect. It will never get any better than today. Let's let today be the day that *Forever Docked* leaves the dock!"

"I told you," I repeated for what must have been the thousandth time, "when I can get one of these experienced people to go out with me, I will go."

With that, Bill was on a mission. He began walking up and down the dock, looking for the folks who'd already mentioned their willingness to go out with me. Anyone would do, really.

He finally found Joe.

"My friend wants to go out on his boat," Bill called out. "But he won't go without you, so if you don't go with him it will never leave the dock."

And, with that, my desperate-to-leave-the-dock friend had found us three volunteer passengers for the inaugural cruise.

With us would be John, Janet, and Joe.

John and Janet are a married couple who live aboard during the summer, wintering in North Carolina. John held a Coast Guard captain's certificate until the second of two strokes made him decide to give it up, but still manages to take his place at the helm of his boat, a 38-foot Chris Craft, quite often.

John had told me that Joe once held a tug boat captain rating and is the man to take with you when you're learning to pilot a boat. Joe lives aboard a 1970s-era Harbor Master houseboat. He tells me that he first visited our marina when he purchased his boat seven years before and, although he had originally planned to return home with it, he had fallen in love with the park and the people.

With Joe, John, and Janet as my guides, we'd take my boat out onto Seneca Lake - and, hopefully, I'd learn a thing or two in the process.



Maneuvering a 36 foot cabin cruiser is much different from a 26 foot sailboat.

For starters, the marina is very similar in size, save for a little wider slip width to accommodate a wider beam. That means that the extra ten feet of boat length basically leaves your bow ten feet closer to everything in front of you, adding something of an intimidation factor.

I mentioned this to John when I first met him. He'd offered to take me out anytime I was ready for a cruise, and I told him I wasn't sure I'd *ever* be ready.

"This might just be my cottage on the water this first year," I admitted.

"Nonsense," John had said. "It's easy. You've got twin screws. She'll turn on a dime. Let me know when you want to go out."

Twin screws refers to the fact that my Trojan is a twin-engine craft. One engine means the boat must be steered with the wheel or, in the case of my Chris-Craft Pawnee, the rudder. Two engines means the boat can be steered with engine thrust – you don't even *touch* the wheel when you're maneuvering in and out at the dock. This, everyone told me, is supposed to be easier.

We would see...

At the beginning of the ride Bill had pledged that he planned to go swimming.

"No, you're not," I told him. This cruise was about learning, and I didn't want to waste my volunteer instructors' time.

"You don't want to test out your swim ladder?" Bill prodded.

"I mean... if there's time..." I had stammered.

"Oh, there's time. We have all the time in the world," John said calmly, reassuringly.

I would later realize Janet had worn her bathing suit for a reason – it was hot, and she was hoping to take a dip, as well.



We were in the middle of a drought, and the day was especially hot, nearing 90 degrees. Going for a boat ride and *not* getting wet would have been cruel to my passengers. Who knows – I might have faced down my first mutiny! So I relented.

“I’m not going in with the engines running,” Bill said.

Hmm – I hadn’t thought of that. Did we have time to shut down the engines? Starting them would mean another delay as we waited for the blower motor to clear the boat of gas fumes. Should I leave them running?

“You *have* to shut down the engines,” John told me, saying it in a way that didn’t even make me feel stupid for not having realized that myself. With that I turned off the starboard engine, followed by the port.

Janet entered the water first. Bill stood on the swim platform, hesitating. Would the swim ladder be strong enough to support his weight, he wondered?

“Will it make you feel better if I get out and get back in?” Janet asked him. It would, so she did, mentioning that the ladder was in excellent condition.

“I always have trouble getting out on these things, and I had no trouble with yours. This is a very good platform setup,” she told me. By now Bill was reassured, and he entered the water and exited, concurring – the swim platform was great!

John sat with me, watching his wife swim around the boat, a look of satisfaction on his face. I was glad that, in needing to take some experienced boaters with me to absorb their knowledge and boost my confidence, I was also able to show them a good time out on the water. This was what being a part of a marina community was about, I thought.

“How does it feel to be the captain?” Joe asked me.

“I don’t know if I’d say *captain*,” I answered. “But it feels good to have gotten some experience and – “

“You are most definitely the captain,” John interrupted. “And as captain, you’re responsible for the safety of everyone on this boat. Keep an eye on your passengers in the water, and know where they are at all times. Keep an eye on the shore, on the buoys, and know where your boat is at all times.”

“Situational awareness,” Joe chimed in.



“Technically, if something goes wrong, *this guy* is in charge,” John joked, pointing to Joe. “Mister Tugboat. And then me. And *then* you. So enjoy it today. But when we’re not here, and you take the boat out, you’re responsible for everyone’s safety. Don’t ever forget that.”

Re-starting the engines would be easy. Keeping the “touchy” starboard engine started, however, would be something of a challenge.

The seller had shown me how it’s done during our ‘repositioning cruise’. The problem was, he’d made it look easy. With ten years experience on the boat he knew where each engine should be running. A few taps on the throttle and he had both engines sync’d to the correct RPM. He’d even let me try it, and I’d had very little trouble - *then*. Now, however, my taps were either too much or too little. The starboard engine stalled out twice, and it seemed like they’d never sync up. When they were within 20 of each other Joe and I finally agreed that was as close as we were getting on this cruise. The boat was pulling to the left just a bit, but into the channel we went.

“The worst thing that can happen to you in the marina is an engine stall,” John told me as we motored along. “You lose an engine, and then what? First you’ve got twin screws, and now you’ve got one screw. What if the wind takes you? Now you’re *really* screwed.”

Umm... what?

“These engines are feeling strong,” Joe said reassuringly. “Nothing to worry about.”

I wondered if he meant that, or just meant it to be reassuring to me until we got into the dock.

I steered us into the channel. Fishermen sat on the pier, seemingly oblivious to the fact that a captain with zero boating experience was about to turn left and attempt to dock a whole lot of boat in the marina. I thought back to all of the afternoons I sat in the cockpit of my sailboat trying to hide my amusement at the legion of boaters clearly lacking experience with their crafts. I suddenly felt bad about that, realizing that I could be today's entertainment.

“You’ve got a party barge coming our way,” Joe called out.

Oh, I saw it. And the jet ski behind it. And the boat just behind it.



Shit. It was like a parade of boats had come along just in time to spoil my day.

“Just remember to use your controls,” Joe said calmly. I put the engines into reverse and the boat came to a stop. We were pointed to the left, so I used the engines to point us to the right. And then back to the left a bit.

This was kind of fun!

“Now you’ve got to be concerned with what’s coming up behind you,” John pointed out, “because you’ve stopped dead in the channel. Are the boats behind you going to know you’ve stopped?”

Shit, shit, shit.

I turned around and saw that there weren’t actually any boats behind us – this was just another learning opportunity.

"Make sure they've got room to go around you," Joe continued. I pictured a multiple-boat pileup in the channel on a busy weekend afternoon, and made a mental note to try to avoid taking the boat out on weekends until I got a bit more experience.

The party barge passed us, and then the jet ski.

“You might be able to split the jet ski and the next boat,” John said.

No, I thought – I’m doing well here. I’ve got this boat under my control. I’m going to stay right here and wait for a longer opening. Just to prove to myself that I can.

That last boat came past so slowly at one point Joe wondered aloud if they might just be fucking with us. Once it passed us I was ready to turn in.

“Remember, only go as fast as you want to hit something,” John reminded me.

So slowly - so, *so* slowly - we went.

If you were one of the boaters on 'Mahogany Row' that day, you would have seen my F36 motor past at almost a stalled pace.

Seriously – at one point I think we weren’t moving at all.

“You’re doing great!” John called out.



“Am I going too slow?” I asked.

“Not at all – go the speed *you* want to go,” Joe reminded me.

We passed my slip, and Joe suggested where I should stop the boat. I can’t remember exactly how far we went, and wish I’d made it a point to make a note of our stopping point for future sailing.

“Now you’re going to back into your slip,” Joe prompted me.

“So... back and to the left...”

“Back in how *you* want to back in,” Joe said.

I used the engines to motor backward, going ever-so-slowly. Janet stood on the deck, line in hand, ready to tie off my spring line. Bill stood toward the bow, shouting out reassurances – “wow, you’re doing great!” And John and Joe sat on the bridge with me, watching my hands, ready to step in at any moment should I royally fuck up.

Oddly, nothing went horribly wrong.

“Tap that one forward,” Joe instructed, pointing to the controls. “That’s good – now, tap the other one back.” I tried to follow his directions the best I could, but kept forgetting that a tap is supposed to be quick. Instead of tapping I was putting the engines into forward, then into reverse. Oops! Still, Joe patiently lead me through the steps, not seeming (or pretending not) to notice that I wasn’t quite following them exactly as described.

At one point Joe, who’d stood up to watch what was happening with our lines, called out that I was in the right position while John simultaneously told me to tap the engine forward a bit, suggesting we were getting too close to the marina wall. Fearing a collision with that breakwall you’d better believe I tapped it forward, only to watch Janet look up at me in surprise as the line she was holding very quickly went taught.

“You don’t need to worry about your stern anymore, you’ve got your spring line attached,” Joe pointed out.

“Whoops,” John mouthed to me, not wanting to publically acknowledge giving me instructions that might have resulted in his wife going for a second swim. And then, louder, “you’ll get the hang of it after a few times. You’re doing great!”

We were at the dock, now, securely tied up, and that seemed to be the consensus: that I – or, really, we – had done great.



As we prepared to disembark I thanked my passengers for accompanying me, as well as for the boating lessons.

“I’m up for any boat ride where someone else is paying for the gas,” John quipped.

“Funny, those are words Bill lives by, too,” I told him.

Later Bill reiterated that I had done great.

“You’re a natural!” he said.

I questioned whether his accolades were genuine, or just the words of someone who wanted to go for another boat ride one day, and was hoping to make me feel more comfortable with my captaining via compliments.

Bill also mentioned that he thought it was great that I’d taken Viking Mike’s advice.

“What advice was that?” I asked.

“He said the pile-on is your friend,” Bill reminded me. “You know, to pivot off of it...”

“I hit the pole?” I asked, surprised.

Bill suddenly had a frozen expression on his face, like a deer caught in your headlights.

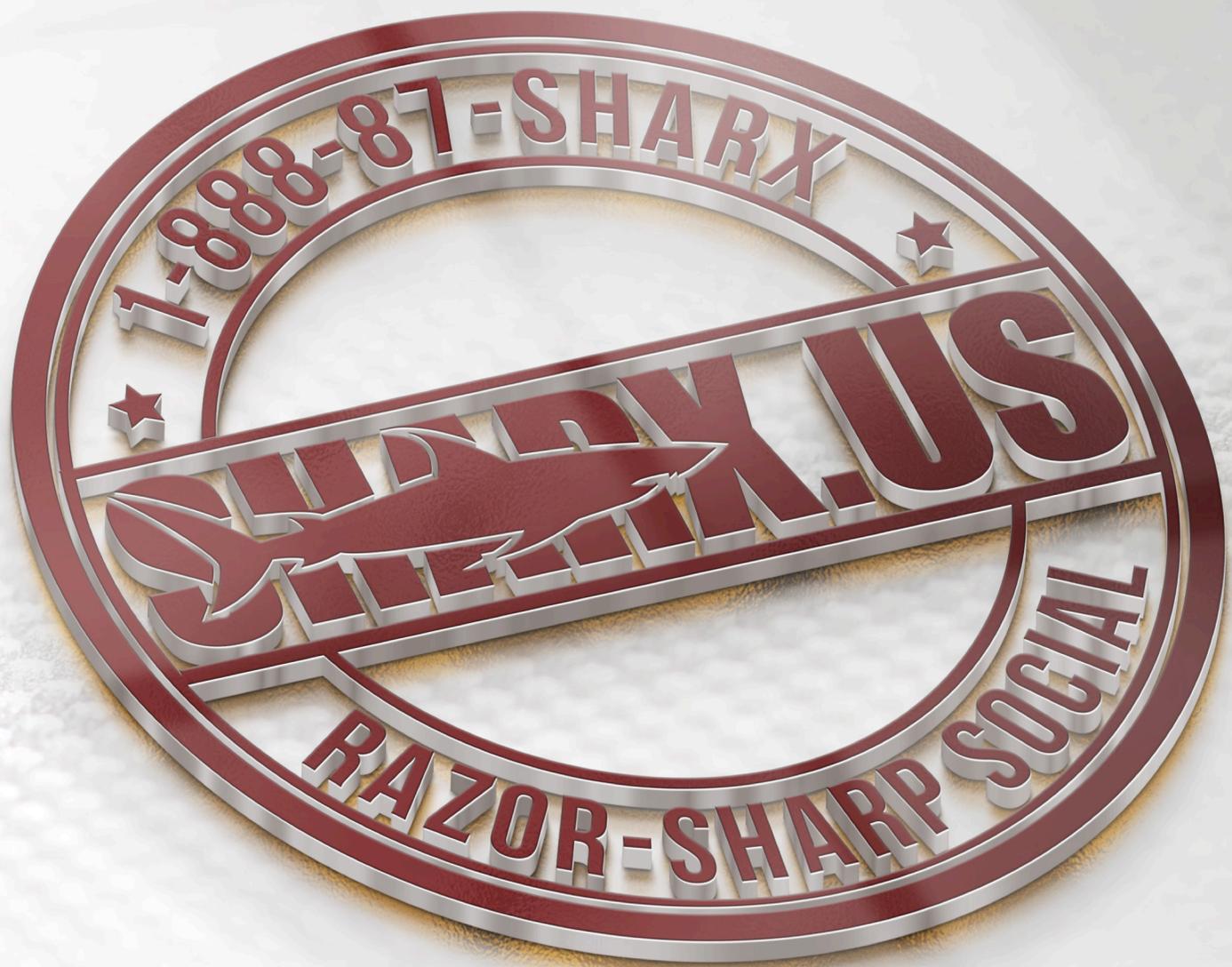
“Nooooooo,” he finally said, after a long pause. “I was just kidding. You did great. Can’t wait to go again – you’ll get better each time...”

“I can’t wait to go again,” I admitted.

“*Forever Docked* has officially been re-named,” Bill noted. “From now we shall call her *Went Out Once*.”

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