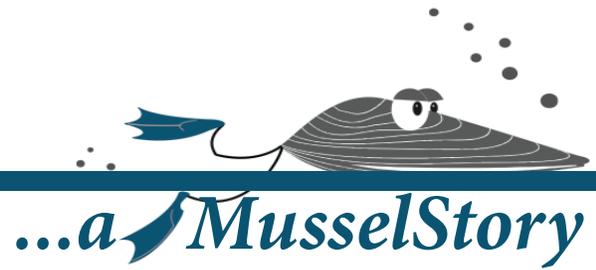


Musselman Triathlon *Spotlight Stories*



It's Like Riding A Bike...



Ken Cigler, 57, of Chittenango, began training for a triathlon the way many triathletes do: simply putting one foot in front of the other in an effort to lose excess weight.

"I'd gone directly from a stick figure to middle age spread," Cigler says. "I was approaching 48 years of age, with a 46-inch waist, and 237 pounds on my 6'3" frame. Add to that the fact that I was about to quit smoking after more than 35 years, so I was becoming paranoid about gaining even more weight."

Cigler began watching his diet and working out with moderate success. Then he decided to step it up a notch.

"I started running and the weight just kept coming off. As I got faster, I got addicted to speed. I'd read numerous warnings that this happened to people," he admits. "I started to get injured." It was during a period of recovery that Cigler got on a bike.

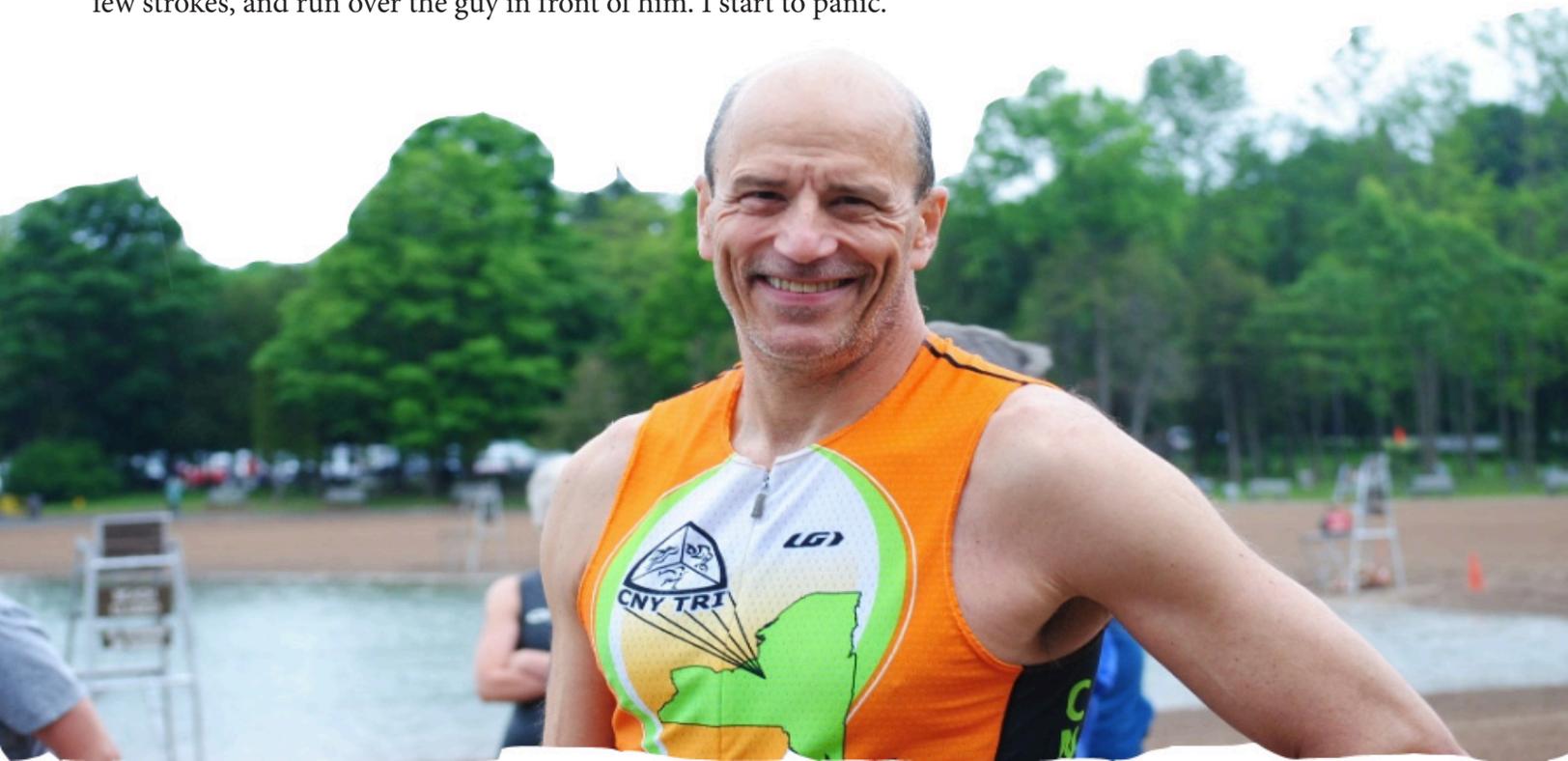
"I'd inherited a 30 year-old, 30 pound TREK bicycle. I realized I remembered how to ride, and at some point it hit me: if I started swimming, I could do a triathlon!"

Cigler says swimming didn't come back to him as quickly as bike riding had – it took him thirty minutes to swim 300 yards his first session. He continued to train, however, and fixed up a more race-ready Cannondale bike he'd also inherited; by the next year he felt ready to take the plunge.

"By the time I was ready to do my first triathlon I'd only swum in open water twice," Cigler says. "It was much more constricting than I expected – sighting was much more difficult, and I was suddenly not comfortable in the water."

The race was a mass men's start, and Cigler lined up in the back with what he thought were most likely the other non-swimmers.

"The horn goes off and I start swimming. I immediately run over the guy in front of me. I get around him, take a few strokes, and run over the guy in front of him. I start to panic."



The swim was exhausting, and Cigler wound up swimming the breast stroke throughout most of it. He walked to transition and, as he mounted his bike, it began to rain.

“This is now my first-ever ride in the rain! I survived the road and didn’t crash, but by the time I actually get on the run course my hamstring, which I’d pulled a few weeks before during training, is feeling really tight. I wound up walking the entire 5K run! I spent the whole time arguing with myself over giving up or finishing. In the end, I did choose finishing.”

Cigler’s next race would be the CNY Tri Club’s Cazenovia Triathlon. This time he would be better prepared, having ridden the course with some club members to prepare for the hills. After a better swim and a strategic bike ride where he saved something for the run, he completed the race.

Emboldened, Cigler upgraded to a QR carbon tri bike and hired a coach.

“I decided I was way too old to learn all this triathlon stuff the hard way,” he jokes.

He believes that the training since last season, and the new equipment purchase, will pay off this year at the Musselman.

Still, he confesses to being a bit nervous.

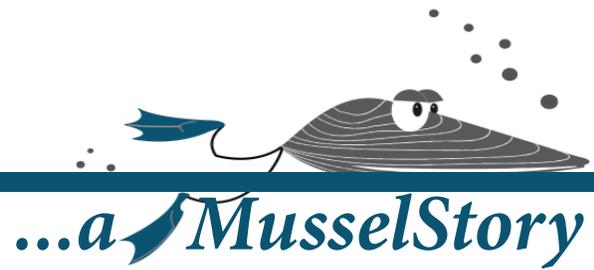
“My coach, Kelly Covert at T2 Multisport, has done the Musselman before. She said it was a well-organized race on a fantastic course. I was concerned with how early the Syracuse 70.3 race is, but the Musselman is late enough in the year to allow water temp to come up, and I can also get plenty of bike miles in before the race.”

After stepping up to the half-Iron distance race this year Cigler eventually hopes to work his way up to a full-Iron distance race.

“For the first time in my life I’m eating to train instead of training to justify all the junk food I used to stuff in my face,” Cigler says. “I am hoping the additional weight loss – and leanness – adds up to a better time. I’m now down under 175 pounds, and my waist is 31 inches. Really looking forward to this race!”



Support Structure...



“I remember very vividly one icy February morning as I rocked my fourth son, Roy, suddenly thinking that I needed to do some cardio exercises for my heart - so I could be around to raise them,” remembers Musselman triathlete Kelly Follman. She also remembers that being the day she decided to give running a try.

“I had been the consummate band geek in high school, having been cut from both the basketball team and the cheering squad. I remember dreading running that mile for the Presidential Fitness test.”

Follman, like many triathletes before her, started her journey from non-triathlete to triathlete slowly.

“My first run was to the end of our long driveway, after which I whined to my husband that it was too hard. Thankfully, ex-Marines are not easily daunted,” says the proud mother of eight. “He encouraged me and coached me, all the way to my first 5K that June.”

The following fall Follman, of Albion, NY would compete in her first half-marathon. Then she found herself bitten by the triathlon bug.

“As I was training for my first Sprint, I discovered I was pregnant. I was given permission by my doctor to keep my training up. Although I was closed out of the race, my last baby, Annabelle, was my best pregnancy and delivery. We wound up going to the race and volunteering – we road marshaled on the bike portion of the race, cheering on my tri friends.”

“Each year I have upped the ante and increased my distances at different races. My good friends Roger and Dana Bolton, both repeat Musselman triathletes, introduced me to this race. “

Follman admits that it takes a large support network, and some creative planning, to fit in all of the training required for a half-Iron distance race. In addition to having a large family, she works full-time as a music teacher in the Rochester City School District, and occasionally performs in pit orchestras, as well.

“My job is an hour away, so on swim days I rise at 4:30, pack my kids’ school lunches, and head to the school pool in Albion. After my laps I dress for work and continue into Rochester. This year, my school principal, who lives fairly close, agreed to throw my bike in the back of her truck so I can get in a nice 42-mile ride home after school.”

Also stepping up to help out the effort: Follman’s own children.

“Once the weather is good, the kids take turns in the paddle boat following me and my training partner, Dana Bolton, as we swim behind our house in Lake Alice. A benefit of a large family is built-in babysitters, so the siblings watch each other and the Bolton children as the Moms get in their training.”

The family has decided to forgo a family gym membership for seven, and instead works out in the barn outside their home.

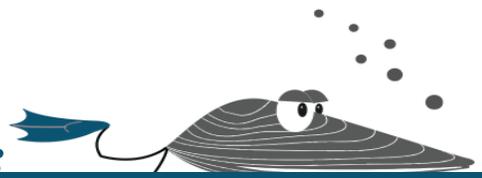
“Our children are active wrestlers and musicians and dancers,” Follman says, “and it takes both my husband and I to run them to practice. My husband, Curt, has created quite the home gym for us all to enjoy, so following dinner you will often find us all out in the barn, working out and training together. Early run and bike training are indoors in the barn. My youngest competed in her first kid’s tri last year.”

Follman competed in the Musselman in 2012, and looks forward to her return.

“Last year we planned our family vacation around the Musselman, camping at Sampson. It was a great mental boost to get high fives from the kids, my husband, and my mother-in-law as we biked our portion through the park. And nothing compares to running in the last few yards to the finish with my children along beside me, cheering me on! I am looking forward to another Musselman and we have our campsite booked at Sampson. It will be another opportunity to enjoy triathlon – and, hopefully, to instill in my children the adage that hard work pays off!”



You CAN Run Away From Your Problems...



...a MusselStory

Kathy Hutchinson discovered her journey to triathlon quite by accident – and, along with it, discovered that exercise just may be the key to a healthy, happy life.

“I smoked cigarettes for 35 years,” Hutchinson, who lives in Wanatah, IN remembers. “My son wanted me to quit many years ago, and I wish I had listened to him. Instead, I quit when I turned 55.”

“When I quit I had some really bad side effects. They don’t tell you that you get harmful side effects from *not* smoking! It’s been said that it’s harder to quit smoking than quitting heroin...”

“My body went through some tough stuff when the chemicals started leaving,” Hutchinson remembers. “One effect was panic attacks. I’d never had them before, and had always thought they were fake. Not true! They are not only mental, but physical too!”

The first time Hutchinson had a panic attack she thought she was having a heart attack – she had all the symptoms: racing heart, chest pains, sweating, shaking, unable to walk or stand.

“I left work in an ambulance,” she remembers. “I was told I didn’t have a heart attack... I thought they didn’t know what they were talking about and told them so. I’m sure I was a real hit with the paramedics, nurses, and doctors!”

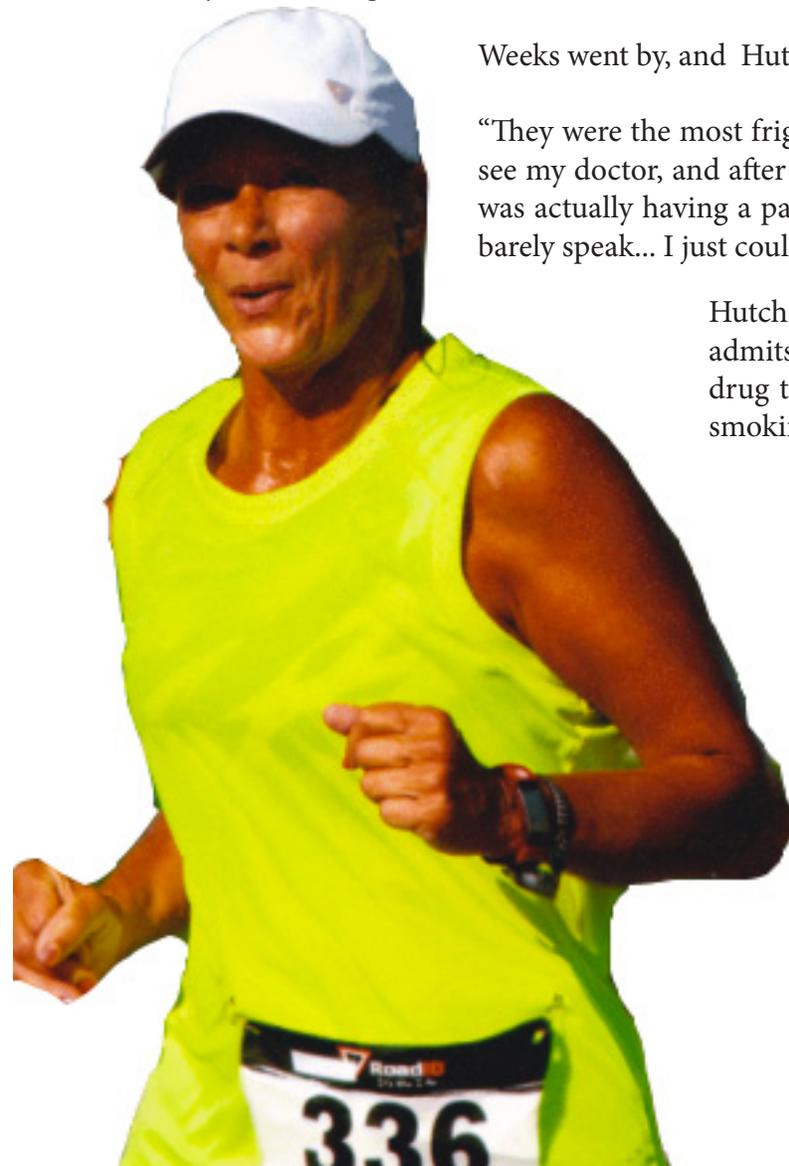
Weeks went by, and Hutchinson continued to have panic attacks.

“They were the most frightening times of my life,” she admits. “I finally went in to see my doctor, and after doing my best to hold it together in the waiting room – I was actually having a panic attack at that time – I completely fell apart and could barely speak... I just couldn’t live like this! It was consuming my life!”

Hutchinson’s doctor would give her a prescription for Xanax. She admits that the thought of having to depend on a psychotropic drug to be normal was scary to her. After all, she had stopped smoking to get drugs and chemicals *out* of her system!

“That first day I took a half of one, hoping that would do the trick. It didn’t. I was out walking my dog and, though I tried to stop it, a huge overwhelming panic came on and I just started to cry. My dog, Sam, must have sensed something and began pulling on the leash. I started running home with him. Something amazing happened while I was running home... the panic attack stopped! I got to my house, and decided to run another block... and then another. I was out of breath, but my head was clear and my heart was racing, but in a good way.”

That was the beginning of Hutchinson’s running career.



“I fell in love with running,” she remembers. “I ran almost every morning, and some days if I got to leave work early, I would go home and run again. I just couldn't get enough!”

Hutchinson ran her first race four months later.

“It was the first time I ever ran five miles,” she remembers. “I wasn't fast, and I didn't break any records – but I ran the whole race.”

“I've run many races since then, and last year began doing triathlons,” Hutchinson says. “My son is running now, too, and we are doing the Musselman together this year.” In fact, Hutchinson's son, Nick Domster, a medic for Bangs Ambulance in Ithaca, has become something of his mother's training partner: the two are doing the Musselman together and, two weeks later, they will do the Buffalo Tough Mudder.

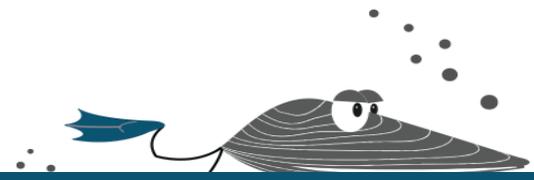
“I don't know if I've trained enough for the Musselman,” Hutchinson admits, “but I have decided I'm going to finish no matter what. You may see me crawling across the finish line.”

As for the panic attacks? Like smoking, they are a part of Hutchinson's past.

“I haven't had a panic attack in over four years,” she says. “I'd like to think I left them on the pavement somewhere. Just goes to show...you *can* run away from your problems. You just have to have the right shoes, and a little workout music.”



Stroke of Luck?



...a *Mussel* Story



Wendy Abbot was already a seasoned veteran of marathons when she did her first triathlon, in 2011. Less than an hour later she would suffer a debilitating stroke. Still, with the perseverance that is a hallmark of a triathlete, Wendy would be on the line for another triathlon the next year.

“Growing up, I never considered myself athletic,” Wendy, of Rochester, says. “Truth be told, I am rather uncoordinated, and not very good at most sports.”

“In 2007, I began running three days a week to get in shape, and did a few local races - first a 5K, then farther and farther, running my first marathon in 2008. I was hooked! By the fall of 2011 I was a full-fledged endurance junkie, having completing nine marathons and training for my first Triathlon.”

Wendy completed Ithaca’s own Finger Lakes Triathlon on September 11, 2011. After the race, as she was preparing to leave, she suddenly felt dizzy and collapsed.

“I fell face-first into the ground, right in front of the race medical tent,” she remembers. “They insisted I go to the emergency room to be checked out.

“I objected, saying that I was completely fine, just dehydrated. Thankfully, they won that argument!”

Once at the emergency room, Wendy felt better, and sent the neurologist away, insisting that she was perfectly fine. Less than an hour later she would realize that all was *not* fine.

“I’d had a stroke caused by a Vertebral Artery Dissection. In a split second I went from feeling fine to having the worst headache of my life - but only on one side of my head - having very little control of my right arm and leg, and not being able to see clearly. I was 37, healthy and an avid Marathon runner. I never imagined that this would have happened to me.

“I was incredibly lucky to receive immediate medical attention and feel very fortunate to have recovered fully! I did spend five days at Strong Memorial Hospital, including three in the Neurological ICU, and was out of work for nearly three months. Still, I was determined from day one that I would get back to all of my favorite activities again, especially running and triathlons.”

Wendy even registered for the 2012 Boston Marathon (for which she had previously qualified) from her hospital room. She would run the race seven months, five days after her stroke.

“It was 89 degrees in Boston that day, so I ended up running slowly, but just being there and finishing the race felt like a victory,” Wendy remembers.

Wendy was in the middle of raising funds for the National Stroke Association for the 2012 New York City Marathon, until the race ended up being canceled due to Hurricane Sandy. She was in New York City for the race that weekend anyway, and volunteered with the relief effort. She continues to raise funds for the Stroke Association and will be running the NYC Marathon later this year.

**For more information, visit:
<http://www.stroke.org/goto/WendyAbbott>**



Matthew Martina, 26, of Pittsford, NY came to the Musselman Triathlon in 2012 to cheer his father on at the finish line, and left Geneva with plans to compete in the race himself a year later.

“My dad, Marty Martina, has done many tri races including the Musselman in past years,” Matthew Martin says. “He really motivated me to give the sport a go.”

“I’ve been a distance runner for about ten years. I always loved cycling and wanted to take riding seriously, but I didn’t have the time in high school or college, so I devoted all my athleticism to running, running at Penfield High School in Rochester and at Syracuse University.

Once I went on to graduate school I was no longer running competitively. I knew it was the perfect time to start cycling,” Martin remembers. “I was still attending Syracuse University, and the riding there is incredible – it’s hard not to want to ride a bike out in towns like Fayetteville, Pompey, Tully, and Lafayette.

Martin is hoping his cycling training, and running background, will be enough to sustain him during the long distances of a half-Iron triathlon.

“I’m 100% excited about the race at this point,” he says. “I’m not too nervous, because it’s such a long race, so it’s not like you’re going 100% in a mile, or all out on 5k on the track. That being said, I know it’s going to hurt.”

Martin admits to being excited about racing in the Finger Lakes.

“The course is great. The swim is in one of the Finger Lakes, which simply can’t be beat. The Finger Lakes is the best cycling region I’ve ever seen, anyway, but I love the Musselman bike course... I’ve ridden it before, and I think it’s very flat, fast and scenic. And the run? The run is hilly and challenging, which I think is an appropriate way to wrap up a triathlon.”

“I’ve been around all types of races from collegiate track and field championships, Ironman events, neighborhood 5ks, and duathlons. Having been a spectator at Musselman in the past, I’ve witnessed how well the race is run. It’s the perfect balance of efficiency, professionalism, and good fun.”

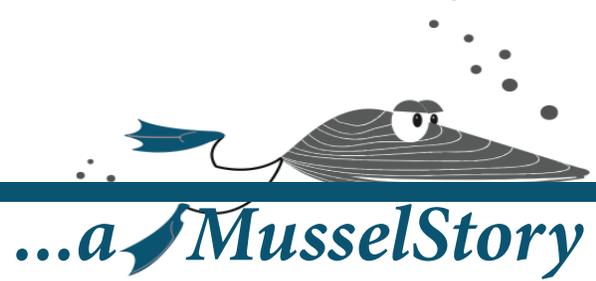
And good fun is what Martin hopes to have as he steps into the water for the swim start on July 14.

“I’m either riding, running, or both on a daily basis now,” he says. “I swam a little this winter, but am only starting to seriously tackle swimming now. It’s a safe bet that my weak part of the race will be in the water!” Martin says that, in this respect, he’s lucky to have a seasoned triathlete in the family. “My dad is a strong swimmer and has been very helpful with form, and giving other swimming advice.

Many triathletes start off with shorter distance races, but not Martin.

“This is my first triathlon event, of any distance, ever. I’ve done many running road races, including the Boilermaker. I skipped a sprint-distance event because the half-Iron distance has a certain illustriousness to it. I think the half distance let’s you get into a great rhythm.”

A Seasoned Pro...

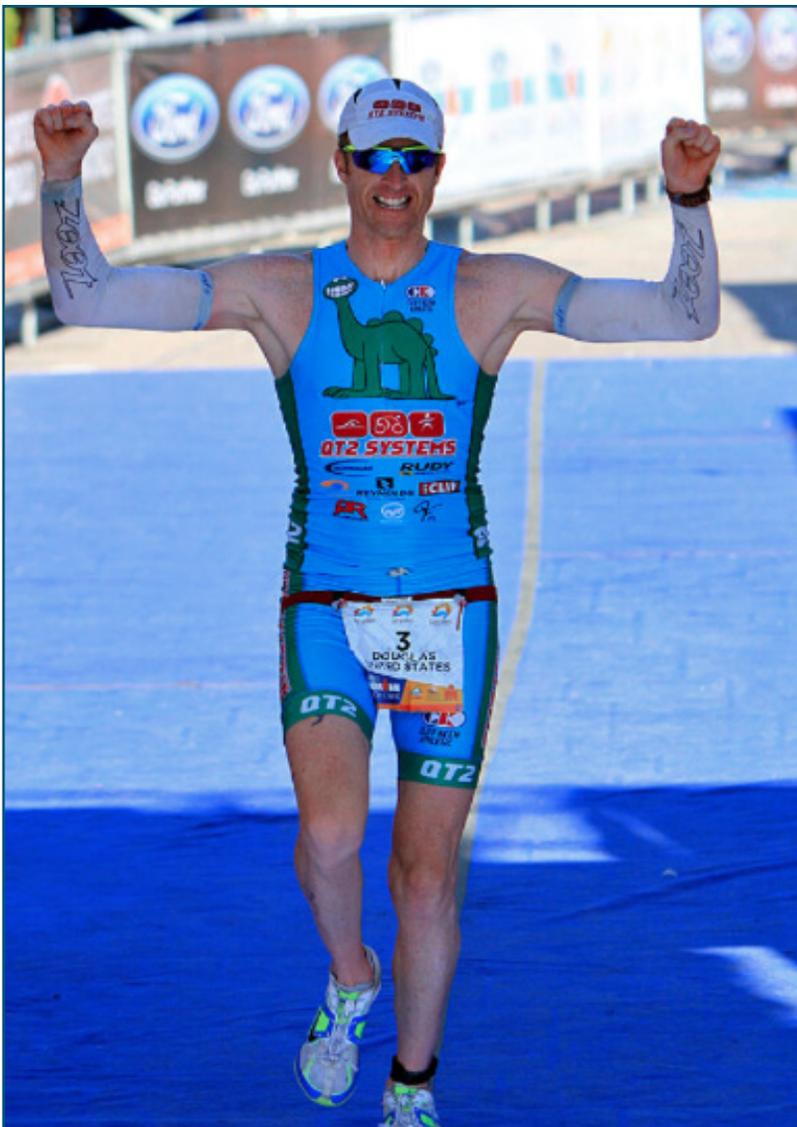


Not every triathlete at the Musselman Triathlon is an amateur. Doug MacLean is a seasoned pro. Literally – he is actually a professional triathlete, currently based out of Ithaca.

“My friend, Dan Fronhofer, raced Ironman Kona in 2005,” MacLean says. “I didn’t really know what Ironman was, I just knew that it was something that took all day. After talking to him about it in the summer of 2006 I decided to try a triathlon.”

MacLean didn’t simply try a tri – he went all in.

“At the time I had no idea that shorter distance triathlons existed, so I just signed up for Coeur d’Alene 2007 and Lake Placid in 2007,” he remembers. “In the fall of 2006 and spring of 2007, I did a few shorter races just to see what triathlon was all about, and then lined up for Coeur d’Alene in 2007, only the sixth triathlon of my life. I had no idea what I was doing. My race fueling plan was built around caffeine pills, PayDay bars, and Red Bull – which, of course, was a terrible idea. It was pretty ugly out there, and I limped across the line in 10:59.”



MacLean was in graduate school at the University of Michigan at the time, and remembers triathlon slowly beginning to replace lab work as his number one priority. In late 2008 he left grad school completely, moving to Colorado in the hopes of making a living through the sport he loves.

“When I was in Colorado I started training full-time, and also dabbled in coaching,” MacLean says. “Coaching went well, and I was lucky enough to be hired by QT2 Systems in 2009. My racing was also progressing nicely – I qualified for Kona at Ironman Arizona in 2009, and raced Kona in 2010. I earned my pro license by winning the amateur championship at IM Coeur d’Alene in 2011, and I’ve been racing as a professional triathlete ever since.”

MacLean continues to work as a coach for QT2 systems.

“I live in Ithaca, NY, so the Musselman Triathlon is very important to me on a personal level – I consider it my 'home turf.'”

For more information, visit MacLean’s official website:

www.rundmcracing.com

Singing A Different Tune...



It took seeing her old self on tape to get Catherine Welch, of Henrietta, NY to make some much-needed lifestyle changes. In the end, those changes would have a lasting effect on her life.

“On December 31, 2005, I spent New Year’s Eve at a friend’s house eating, drinking and playing Karaoke,” she remembers. “The crowd there heckled me until I took the mic and gave my best Cher rendition of “Turn back time.” I didn’t know then it was being recorded, but I later saw the footage and was mortified by my out-of-shape appearance.”

Days later Welch was on a strict diet of minimal calories, horrible tasting food and more vegetables than I was accustomed to eating.

“When I began seeing results, I stopped complaining about the food and started walking,” she recalls. “I was tired of being unhealthy, unfit, overweight and unhappy with my lifestyle.”

Walking, as it so often does, soon turned to running.

“I walked with a purposeful and brisk stride until one day I picked up the pace and started running - more like a shuffle with heavy panting,” she jokes. “I entered a 5K running race in 2007, and again in 2008, and although I never considered myself a runner, I was starting to feel fit.

“I soon dusted off my old mountain bike and started biking my walking routes,” Welch remembers. “I was slow but effective and eventually purchased a new bike and lengthened my rides.

“On the way to church one Sunday, my family traveled through the bike and run routes of the Pittsford Triathlon (a sprint Tri—300 yd. indoor swim, 15 mile bike and 5k run). I was feeling arrogant when I said out loud, “I can do that.” My husband Tim said “sure you can” in an appealing tone. I decided I would sign up for the following year’s event—June of 2010. I never made the race.”

Welch remembers the morning of April 13, 2010 as feeling like any other. She woke up and showered for work, but when I sat on the bed to say good morning to Tim, she felt the right side of her face falling and had trouble speaking.

“I was starting to panic... I knew these were signs of a stroke, so I rushed to the mirror to see if my face was truly falling,” she says. “It wasn’t, but my speech was very slurred and my right arm started tingling and felt like it was detaching from my shoulder. My sweet husband knew just what to say, “Let’s go downstairs and have some toast. That should make you feel better.” I had trouble coming to terms with my symptoms so I drove to work and pretended I was fine. I was worried that people would think I was intoxicated because my speech was still slurred. After a call to my sister, I ended up in emergency where tests ultimately confirmed I had a stroke. I was 39 years old.”

Unknown to Welch, she had what is known as a PFO: a patent foramen ovale, or hole in her heart, present since birth. She had been asymptomatic her entire life until a clot passed through the hole and went up to her brain, causing the stroke. Just days earlier she had been on her bike feeling great, and now she was in a hospital bed viewing MRI images of a brain with lesions on the left side.

Unknown to Welch, she had what is known as a PFO: a *patent foramen ovale*, or hole in her heart, present since birth. She had been asymptomatic her entire life until a clot passed through the hole and went up to her brain, causing the stroke. Just days earlier she had been on her bike feeling great, and now she was in a hospital bed viewing MRI images of a brain with lesions on the left side.

“Looking at the pictures made me queasy,” she remembers. “I felt like I was losing control of my life. After three days in the hospital, I was discharged and went home to recuperate. I was lucky. I had survived a stroke with no obvious impairments.”

Welch remembers a mind-blowing exhaustion overcoming her when she arrived home. I wanted to spare my sons, Colin and Shane (10 and 7 at the time) the “s” word, so they were told that she had suffered a really bad headache but was feeling better.

“They just wanted me back home again even if I was just a fixture on the couch,” she remembers.

After a successful surgery to close the hole performed by her doctor, Dr. Frederick Ling, her activities were restricted for the remainder of the summer. No running, biking or any exercise period.

“It was torture. I decided to give my body time to heal and I mentally outlined racing plans for 2011. I participated in the Pittsford Tri the following spring, the Fingerlakes Tri in September and the Fall Classic Duathlon in October. I was just an age-grouper but I was healthy, strong and still walking the Earth.

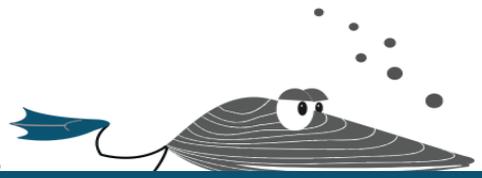
“To this day, I do not take my health for granted. I continue to train and enter as many races as I feel my body can handle. In 2012, I decided to focus on becoming a better runner. I entered my first 10k, did 2 triathlons and competed in my first half marathon. I closed the year with a 5mile race and my fastest 5k to date on a cold December morning just before Christmas. Inspired by my mentor, Beth, I registered for Musselman 70.3.”

It's a race she is looking forward to.

“I hope to cross the finish line – walking, if necessary, or preferably running – into the arms of my family on July 14th,” Welch says. “I swim, bike and run for them so I'll be around a good long time. Maybe I'll watch my grandchildren race someday. Who knows? I'll never be a super-fast triathlete but I will always train hard and be thankful that my body has allowed me to compete amongst some incredible people. I have a lot to be thankful for.”



Running as a Transformation...



...a MusselStory

To hear Paul Rogers tell the story, he woke up one day a few years ago and just decided to begin running. His wife, Danielle, thinks his interest in health, and his sixty-pound weight loss, originated from something much deeper.

"I was a casual runner just four or five years ago," Paul Rogers, of Johnson City, NY remembers. "I'd begun to run consistently, but was slowly working my way toward running a half marathon. Before that I was extremely casual, pretty much never running – unless there was a free beer line.

"My wife and I had a child four years ago and as often happens with new parents, I let everything go. I stopped running. I started eating more. I knew things were going awry, as I had to buy bigger pants. But even that wasn't enough to turn things around."

One day, Paul remembers, he woke up and simply decided: enough was enough.

"I started eating better, and I started exercising regularly. It was a mixture of running and exercise videos, but the increased effort was enough. I finished my first half marathon last May and, after crossing the finish line, I decided to sign up for my first marathon, as well as my first sprint triathlon.

"The triathlon was at the end of June. I competed in that, basically from a running background, with minimal training in the other two disciplines. I had an absolute blast, and finished in 1:50. The marathon was at the end of September. I finished in 4:38, with an automatic PR. It may have been premature of me to run it, but I'm glad I did."

After testing the waters with both a run and a triathlon, Paul realized he'd discovered a new passion.

"I was hooked on this sport," he remembers. "Triathlon was perfect for my style, a 'jack of all trades, master of none.' Then, literally days after the Musselman 2012 I was in Geneva for a vacation, and I saw the wall mural, the banner hanging above the street, all that stuff. I knew that I wanted to take part in 2013, so I went online and registered on opening day. I have been training consistently for this race for months.

"I won't win the race, but I will have come a long way just by crossing the finish line," Paul admits. "The training itself is a journey, and I'm pushing myself further than I ever have in the past. I'm doing my best to push myself past my known physical limits. This is a balancing act, not only physically, but with the other facets of life. My job is demanding, and most importantly, time with my family takes priority. It all comes down to the fact that you can do most anything you want to, if you put your mind to it."

Paul's wife, Danielle, believes that her husband's newfound passion for triathlon goes much deeper than a sudden epiphany to get into shape, however.

"Paul's story goes back to September 2006," Danielle Rogers says. "Paul's older brother, Joe, passed away, just a couple of weeks before his 40th birthday. He had a rare form of multiple sclerosis that took over his body and all of its functions in less than a year."

The two brothers did not share the same mother, and Joe did not get to spend much time with their father, so the two grew up with some distance between them.



“My husband was busy working and completing his PhD in computer science while his brother was busy raising his family,” Danielle remembers. “Paul sometimes felt badly about the lack of closeness in their relationship before his brother got sick.

“He also had a certain amount of guilt about a number of things - we live in New York, Joe and his family lived in North Carolina, so we did not see them often,” she says. “When Joe became sick, Paul went to visit him often. It was heartbreaking to watch their relationship develop so deeply, only to come to such an abrupt end.”

She remembers that her husband was heartbroken, too.

“That was when Paul turned to running,” she says. “I think that he actually began running to cope with the stress and grief generated by the situation. Since then I have watched him turn running to cope into running for exercise and then into running as a challenge.”

Paul just became more open to discussing what happened to Joe’s health, Danielle says - it was a topic no one in the family felt comfortable approaching until recently.

“Joe's condition is not hereditary – it's believed to be an isolated case in the family – but it made us think about our own health and how we lived our lives,” Danielle admits. “We don't know whether or not Joe may have lived longer or been able to fight harder if his physical health had been better before he got MS, but Joe believes very strongly that being in the best possible shape physically can help you face future health challenges, and I agree.”

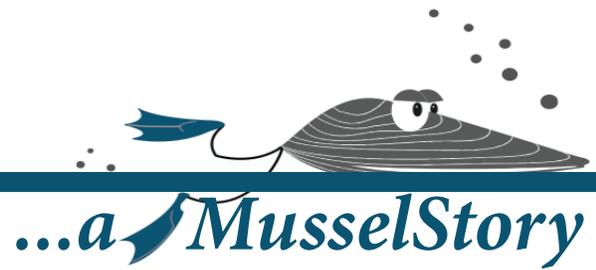
That sentiment, she believes, has driven Joe to put his all into triathlon.

“Magic Johnson is someone we often talk about. He is a strong, healthy athlete who, quite probably as a result, has been able to fight HIV for many years. We have reasoned that if Paul is a strong, healthy athlete, he may also be able to tackle any health crisis he may face down the road.”

Regardless of what might have sparked the start of Paul’s triathlon career, Danielle is just glad that he’s turned to fitness.

“Paul is much too modest to describe all of his talents and gifts,” she says. “He is smart, handsome, and hard-working. He takes amazing care of me and our child. Above all, he believes taking care of his body sets a good example for our son. And I couldn’t agree more.”

That's Loyalty!



In ten years of Musselman Triathlon racing, several thousand triathletes have made their way to the Finger Lakes to wade out into Seneca Lake and transform themselves from regular triathletes to Musselmen and Musselwomen.

Hundreds have returned to do the Mussel a second time. And a third time. And so on.

But making it to every single Musselman Triathlon over the past ten years? That's a feat that's reserved for an impressively dedicated few. This year, to mark the tenth anniversary of the Musselman Triathlon, organizers will recognize the sixteen athletes who have never missed a Musselman. They are:

Cindy Cassetta / Curt Eggers / Mary Eggers / Gary FitzSimons
Jame Gray / Chad Hubbard / Chester Jozefski
Tim Karski / Edmond Mallahan / Danielle Ohlson / Steve Patrick
Glenn Poirier / David Shaw / Bill Srmack / Jennifer Srmack / Ernest Williams

In their own words...



Curt Eggers, Henrietta NY

"I first chose to participate in the Musselman because it was a local race offering a sprint race and a half ironman. It looked like a good venue, and it was a race directed by a seasoned pro triathlete. Luckily enough I won the Sprint race in 2006, the year Jeff Henderson offered the champions a lifetime free entry! I cannot pass up my free entry, now can I?? But seriously, it is an awesome venue/park, great race, good food, tough competition. In other words, it is a win/win.

I have two favorite Mussel memories. The first was when my wife Mary won the inaugural Musselman in 2004. And, the second, when I got DQ'ed the first year I did the Sprint race (2005)... I went off course on some road called "Yale". Boo hoo. Jeff Henderson called me a cheater for two years after that - in jest, I think???"

For the entire list of athletes who have been with us for two or more years, visit
www.musselmantri.com/loyalty



Edmond Mallahan, Oyster Bay, NY

I first heard about Musselman when I read the series Jeff wrote for Slowtwitch.com about what it takes to put on a triathlon. My brother-in-law grew up in Geneva, so I thought I would give the race a try. I figured it wouldn't be hard to get my own cheering section.

My plan was to do a different vacation triathlon each year, to see how other places do it. That plan went out the window when I saw how different triathlon is in Geneva.

The idea that people who knew no one in the race would come out to watch was new to me. That was pretty nice. The triathletes all seemed to be different too. They were just, well, nicer. I didn't see the usual draft packs, and I admit I was taken aback by all of the pre-race smiling.

This was all a nice change for me, but honestly, it was Jeff that made me want to keep coming back. The company that puts on many of the local races makes no pretense that its anything other than a

money thing. I never felt their races were about the racers. I never felt that way in Geneva.

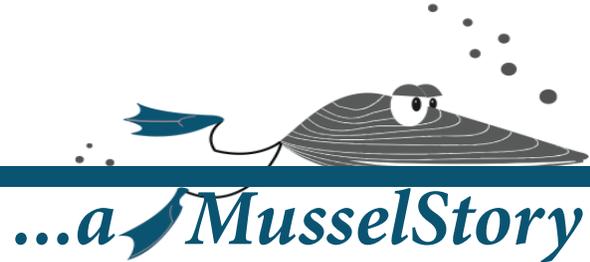
As for a favorite moment... I have a hard time picking a favorite moment. I might lean toward a certain right turn on the old course that I once cleared with inches to spare, but that might just be due to the fact that I didn't quite clear a similar turn in my last triathlon. That one, though memorable, will not be making any top ten moments.

It could be passing the line of buggies last year. It was the first time I've seen them during the ride. Seeing the kids smiling and waving from the back was really nice.

I learned to ride a unicycle for the one time only unicycle super sprint race. (Ok, I only kind of learned how). Since only two of us showed up, I can now be assured of my place in history as the only person ever to lose that race. On the upside, the local newspaper was given the wrong results, so I made the back page as the champ. I still have that paper.

I guess, if pushed, I would pick another super sprint moment though. I put together a Musselman super hero costume for fun. I didn't expect the popularity of it though. Little kids and pretty girls don't normally ask to have their picture taken with me. That was pretty cool.

10 Year Anniversary



Q&A with Glenn Poirier | Wellsboro, PA

What made you decide to try the Musselman in its inaugural year (way back in 2004)?

By accident I came across this race online. I was looking to get back into shape and I used this as spring board to meet that goal.

What's kept you coming back year after year after year?

Beauty of the area, the people who compete, and the race organization which can all attributed to Jeff's dedication and love for this sport.

Favorite Mussel Moment to share?

At the very first half, I was in attendance at Jeff's pre-race meeting at the College and a fellow racer pressed him into answering questions concerning whether or not there would be water on the course or if there would be wetsuit strippers at the swim transition. Needless to say his body language and answers brought the room down.

Q&A with Jim Gray | Elmira, NY

What made you decide to try the Musselman in its inaugural year (way back in 2004)?

I had done other triathlons in the area and Geneva, a park, and Seneca Lake sounded appealing.

What's kept you coming back year after year after year?

It is the best run race in the country. It gets better year by year. Things get tweaked and improved, like the new swim. There is also usually a pleasant and unexpected surprise like the shampoo one year, the little mussel dolls another.

Favorite Mussel Moment to share?

I had finished the race and was sitting on the lawn with my wife and a few of my grandchildren having a picnic. From the corner of my eye I saw a guy, a wife and two children coming in my direction and saying, "It's him, it's him!" There was a crowd so I didn't think anything of it. They kept getting closer and repeating, "It's him, it's him!" now pointing directly at me. I didn't know them from Adam. They finally came right up to me and the fellow said, "You don't know me, but last year you finished right in front of me. You are in all of our finish line photos including the one on the wall, and our screen saver."

Q&A with Jennifer Srmack | Geneva, NY

What made you decide to try the Musselman in its inaugural year (way back in 2004)?

I had just graduated from college and my dad convinced me to do the Musselman with him.

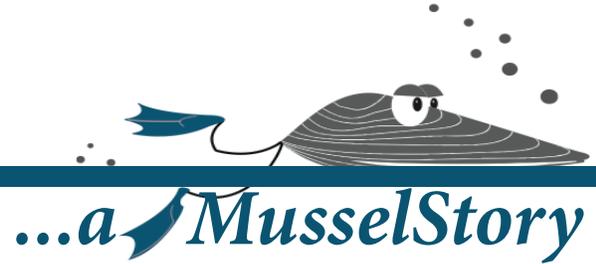
What's kept you coming back year after year after year?

Every year its seems to be more fun than the last. Maybe because I keep meeting more triathletes and convincing more friends to compete!

Favorite Mussel Moment to share?

This year will probably become my favorite Mussel moment. After nine years of doing the sprint I've finally decided to do the half. My dad will be doing the sprint along with my stepmom (this will be her first tri) - a Mussel Virgin!! My niece will also be doing the Friday kids race. This will also be the first year for the Finger Lakes Triathlon Club.

10 Year Anniversary



Q&A with Bill Srmack | Clifton Springs, NY

What made you decide to try the Musselman in its inaugural year (way back in 2004)?

What made me decide to enter the Musselman in 2004 was my daughter Jennifer. She kept saying she wanted to do a triathlon. One winter night in 2004 I happened to look on the Geneva Bike Shop's web page and they had posted about a new race coming to Geneva, the Musselman Triathlon. So I told Jennifer if she would do the sprint I would do it with her. And as they say the rest is history, we've been doing the race together for the past 10 years.

Since the first Musselman in 2004 Jennifer has taken the poster from that years race, framed it, and given it to me for a Christmas gift. I have all the posters hanging on my living room wall.

What's kept you coming back year after year after year?

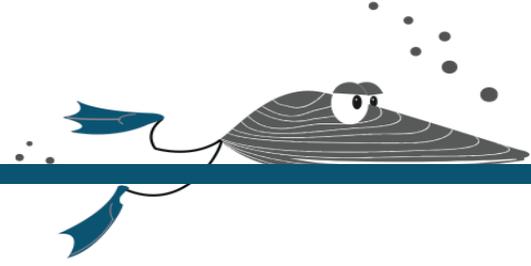
What keeps me coming back is the challenge and excitement of the race, meeting new people and catching up with old friends. I like the positive attitude the you have from the people around you on race day, and how Jeff, and the race committee give 110% to make the weekend a memorable event for the athletes and the community. And, of course, that I have the opportunity to train and spend time with my daughter.

Favorite Mussel Moment to share?

I have many favorite moments but I will always remember the bagpipes playing on the morning of the first Musselman. The excitement, the anticipation and the sound of bagpipes as I was walking down to the lake. It was definitely memorable. Another fond memory was last year 2012. Jennifer and I did the Sprint and that afternoon my granddaughter Lily did the Kids Tri for the first time. Three generations participating and having fun together in the Musselman Triathlon! How great is that?



10 Year Anniversary



Q&A With Steve Patrick | Cortland, NY

What made you decide to try the Musselman in its inaugural year (way back in 2004)?

A friend had found the race, and had trained hard for it. About a month before he had asked me to come up and 'crew' it for him, adding that 'if you weren't such a 'wimp,' you would just do it with me.' After having a few too many beers at a Fourth of July barbeque, I decided to go for a very long run in the 85-degree heat. I figured that if I could make it through a 17-miler, then I could finish. I did, so on Tuesday (I believe it was July 6th, and yes, it was just 5 days before the inaugural race) I entered, borrowed a bike, and got my hands on a grubby boogie board wetsuit so I wouldn't sink quite so readily.

What's kept you coming back year after year after year?

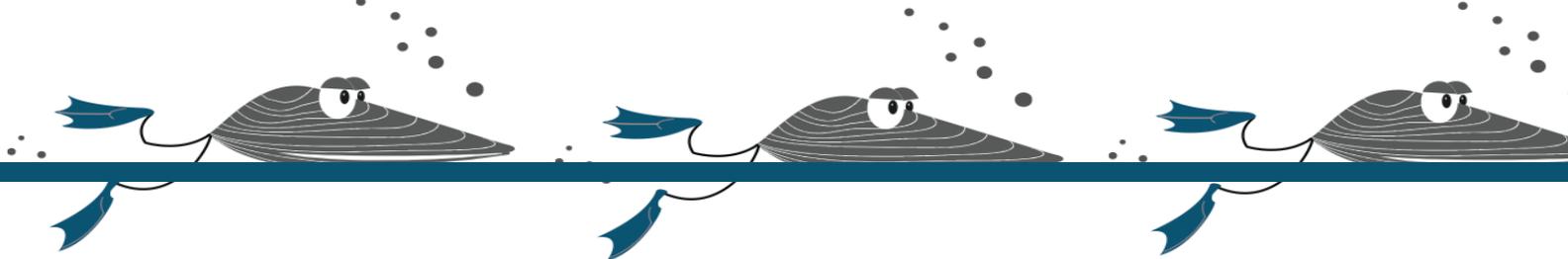
I have a high tolerance for both pain and stupidity? First, the race is for a great cause! Second, it's extremely well-run! Third, it's the only event I get updates from that are laugh-out-loud funny. An mass email from Jeff Henderson almost always brings a smile to my face. Fourth, I like to make lists. Fifth, it gives me a yearly goal – something I am committed to doing whether or not I am ready – so that helps motivate me to be active. My athletic career for endurance sport ended in 1997, and that is OK with me – I get my fix coaching now. But this race provides me with a little extra motivation to stay engaged in a healthy level of fitness and activity that I might not otherwise achieve. Sixth, it's pretty close – and that is convenient.

Favorite Mussel Moment to share?

It's been a huge blur for me – but it's always been a great time! I can think of one funny one: about 5 years ago another guy in my age group and I were limping out of transition onto the run course... making great speed at 12-minute pace, and stopping to walk every 3rd minute or so. An older gentleman came upon us – clearly old enough to be our father. Seriously, it was written on his leg! We all made small talk, and the other 'young' guy mentioned that we was thinking about heading up to Lake Placid to volunteer for the ironman so he could gain a registration spot for the next summer. The 'older' guy responded "Great! I'll see you up there! I'm competing." And then he ran away from us. Very, very quickly. Neither of us spoke as his profile slowly proceeded away from us along the world's longest bike path on the North End of Seneca Lake.



To see the entire list of Mussel Loyalty visit <http://www.musselmantri.com/loyalty>.



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C. D. Henderson
Coordinator, Public Relations & Media
Musselman Triathlon
Post Office Box 781175
Orlando, FL 32878
1-800-915-6960
407-442-2790 Fax

RaceDay:
1-800-915-6760
Or Dial **00700 From Your Wireless Phone

Twitter:
[@Musselmantri](#)
[#Musselman](#)

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