



Escaping from Alcatraz (con.)

Aquatic Park to Mill Valley in Marin. However, while it is relatively flat, riding for an hour after that no wetsuit swim, particularly if it is a windy day on the bridge is something that must be practiced. Most participants find they need to cover all of their skin to avoid frost-bite-like feelings.

The run for the Trical and Enviro races are basically the same, however the Enviro run includes a 2.5 mile before the bike because of the difference in the location of the transition area. Both of these races have made various changes to the run over time. With the DSE race, the run is what the race is all about. For most of the participants, the swim is nothing out of the ordinary, but the run is the infamous "Double Dipsea" (14+ miles of rugged trails climbing 4500 feet and more than 1200 stairs). This makes the race 1-2 hours longer than the other two races. Even if you have run the Double Dipsea before, it is totally different after 2 hours of swimming and biking. Our toes have yet to ever had feeling until after the second mile of the run.

GGTC: What's your most memorable escape (moment or race)? The best? The worst?

Mark: Because the water in the bay is so murky you can't see other people's feet. One year I got kicked in the nose so hard that I thought it was broken and bleeding, I feared drowning. Then it went numb and I forgot about it. Another year in the DSE race I thought my big toe was broken after the first 800 stairs that start the double dipsea, I finally stopped and took my shoe off only to find the lid to a Vaseline tube in my shoe, that's how numb your feet get! But mostly, I think about how lucky we are to have one of the most beautiful and interesting race courses in the world!

Sunny: My best memory of an Escape race was one year when the current was moving so fast towards the GG Bridge that many of us were swept west of the opening to Aquatic Park. I was swimming against the current to try to get back in, but finally swam under Muni Pier where I found about 4 or 5 other people. We all climbed over the cement wall under the pier and then swam to shore without any problem.

GGTC: Any tips for us?

Mark: You bet, here are a few and we would be happy to share more with anyone who is interested.

1. Get in the bay and be comfortable with the tides
2. Run lots of hills and stairs
3. For the Double Dipsea, take a minute before the run to put a little Vaseline on your toes and feet. It will keep them from being torn apart on the trails and downhills.

4. On the boat ride to Alcatraz, get your bearings and pick your sighting markers. Then at the start of the swim get away from the crowd as soon as you can and pause to get your orientation. Listen to the pre-race advice on currents.

Sunny:

1. Practice the swim bike transition with bay swims. Riding a bike when you are cold to the core takes a lot more coordination and you should be familiar with that feeling before race day.
2. Ride the bike course often.
3. Know the currents on the day of the swim and listen to the pre-race instructions.

GGTC: So how have you two done over the years?

Mark: Usually I finish in the top 10 in my age group and several top five finishes.

Sunny: Usually in the top three of my age group. In the Enviro Escape I have come in 1st place in six of the last 8 years.

If anyone wants to learn more about any of the races or how to participate in the DSE Escape race, we will be happy to tell you what's involved and share more information.*

Sunny and Mark McKee, the incredible Alcatraz duo are seasoned triathletes, both with strong age group results and as such, members of the inaugural GGTC Podium Program. They are constants at GGTC track, M2 spin and yes, they swim the Bay everyday without a wetsuit -- two great tri resources!

**Please see the website for the complete article from Sunny and Mark*

Check out the website for more information on anything you see here and more!
ggtc.org

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GOLDEN GATE TRIATHLON CLUB

www.ggtc.org

June 2003

Letter from the President

We just keep on rockin'! After our second place finish at the Wildflower team competition, we've ramped up again and are proud to return as the host club for the Escape from Alcatraz Triathlon! What does this mean for us? We get to be racers, organizers and supporters of one of the top races in the country. If you're racing, hopefully you're taking advantage of some great Alcatraz specific bike, run and swim clinics the last few weeks. If not, don't worry, there's more where that came from...check the back page of the newsletter for future training opportunities. If you're not racing, hopefully you're choosing to give back to the commu-

nity that we love so much. Every time you do a race, volunteers are out on the course to direct you (where would you end up without them), give you water during moments of need (can't gu w/out it) and offer a smile or cheer along the way (always needed). Even if you've never volunteered before, don't be shy, no experience necessary...

www.ggtc.org/tri-cal-volunteer.php

Stephnee Greenwood
GGTC President

Escaping from Alcatraz

An Interview with two successful escapees Sunny and Mark McKee

GGTC: So just how many times have each of you "Escaped From Alcatraz?"

Sunny and Mark: We have each completed more than 20 Escape from Alcatraz Triathlons. Most people don't realize that there are actually three Escape races each year. Everyone seems to identify with the largest race that is put on by TriCalifornia "Trical". The other two races are the EnviroSports "Enviro" Escape, and the Dolphin South End Clubs "DSE" Escape race. The DSE race is the original race started more than 20 years ago and is the only race that hasn't changed its course.

GGTC: The swim from Alcatraz is the same, but what makes the races different from each other?

You might think that would be the case but the swims are quite different from each other as are the bike and run segments.

The dates of the races change each year due to tidal conditions and the permits required. Generally, the first race each year is the Trical race, the second is the Enviro Escape race, and the third is the DSE Escape race.

The Trical race is more of a tide ride than the others and therefore often has the fastest swim times. You

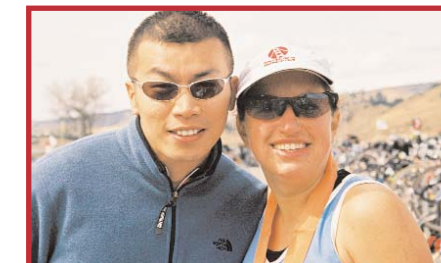
jump off the boat and work your way across the bay while the tide moves you towards the GG bridge arriving at the St. Francis Yacht Club. The biggest issue with this swim is the start and making sure you get across the bay before being swept out to sea, but being careful not to get too close to shore where there is "dead water."

The Enviro swim is much more technical requiring you to cross the currents and enter the opening to Aquatic Park. This race can be scheduled as a "high water" or "low water" crossing. We will let our club expert Pedro provide even more technical information. What we can tell you is that you don't want to miss the opening and have to fight an ever-increasing current. Once it happens to you, and it has to each of us, you never want it to happen again.

The DSE swim is unique and has a major effect on the rest of the race. No wetsuits allowed! It is held at the end of October each year when the bay temperature has begun to drop. If you have ever done the race in a nice toasty wetsuit and thought you had cold feet or hands after the swim, you should try getting on the bike when your core temperature has dropped and your entire body is numb!

The Trical bike is the most interesting and fairly hilly, the Enviro bike is a series of hilly loops within the Presidio and the DSE bike is an easier ride form

(continued on page 4)



Membership Benefits

Check out all the discounts GGTC members get from local services. Just some of the member benefits!

e-caps

10% Discount to GGTC members

Hallie Widlow - Massage

GGTC members receive \$50 on-site and \$55 off-site for 60 minutes of pure heaven.

Find these and more sponsorships at ggtc.org/sponsors.php

Dear Coach Phil

I am new to triathlon and have just completed my second race. It seems everyone passes me on the bike. I have noticed most people have aero bars when they go by me. Should I consider putting aero bars on my bike if I don't want to keep getting passed?

Elizabeth

Dear Elizabeth,

Congratulations on completing your second triathlon. Should you consider putting aero bars on your bike; yes! Aero bars allow you to better maintain a position that is both more aerodynamic and more powerful. Aero bars are however just a tool. They do not by themselves "make you faster". Your overall aero position of which aero bars are a part allow you to maintain a given speed over a certain distance while utilizing less energy. If you have two cyclist of equal talent pushing at the same intensity and wattage the one with the proper aero position will be able to maintain that status longer. When should you consider aero bars? Aero bars require a bit of skill to use since your weight distribution will be changed to be a bit more weight forward and your hands will be further away from your brakes. Both of these situations favor the more experienced rider. I almost always recommend someone have at least 6 months riding experience before they consider aero bars.

In my fitting business many variable go into the decision as to which bars is best. The overall position, the bike itself, Geometry, flexibility, racing distances and experience are just part of what determines the right bar for you on your specific set-up. Good luck to you in your future triathlons and remember no piece of equipment can make up for training, it can only enhance your training.

Coach Phil Casanta

Inside:

- Swim Bike and Run activities
- Alcatraz tips
- Social Activities
- Volunteer of the Month

JOIN US after our swim THURS 6/5 for our annual Alcatraz bag stuffing on Marina Green. Pizza and beer provided!

Post Alcatraz Party

Come celebrate your race, and appreciate all volunteers!

check web for full details

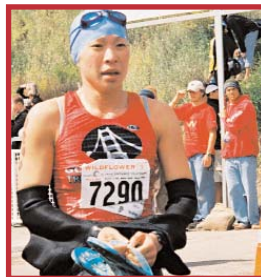


Volunteer of the Month

Cathy Morgan

For her continued support of GGTC and her recent efforts in making Escape from Alcatraz a huge success, we congratulate Cathy Morgan as Volunteer of the Month!!

Mark Your Calendars
next Monthly meeting is July 7th.
Check web for details
ggtc.org



SWIM

Sunday Swims

Acclimate to the bay water every Sunday. Upcoming Swims: 6/15 - Aquatic Park, Swim Leader: Geoff
Time to be announced, 6/22 - Aquatic Park, Swim Leader: Chris. Time: 3:00 p.m.
PARTICIPATE in the club: VOLUNTEER TO BE A SWIM LEADER! Just call Geoff at 831-9900.

Open Water Swims

Meet at 6pm, Jump at 6:30pm every Thursday with the Mighty Pedro at the South End Rowing Club, 500 Jefferson St (& Hyde) (Aquatic Park). \$7 a pop. We've been having some bitchin' swims! Come join us. (Next Orientation is sometime in July.)

H2 Masters Lite

Golden Gateway Tennis & Swim Club on 370 Drumm St. Sessions.....Mondays @ 7pm - 8pm Cost: \$100 for 10 classes. Please notify Holden at least 24hrs in advance that you would like to attend. Questions/concerns?: Contact Coach Holden Hardcastle

Private Instruction

Holden Hardcastle
415.931.9631
h0ld3n@sbcglobal.net
Bjorn Holtan
bjornholtan@earthlink.net.

Questions/Comments/Concerns?

Contact the Swim Director at geoff.farrell@ggtc.org

Alcatraz Tips from a GGTCer

Last year, I was very excited—ok, obsessed—about the Escape From Alcatraz, my second major race and still my favorite. I will share some of the preparation, knowledge I gained, and mistakes so you don't have to make in this race and other races.

WHAT'S THE APPEAL OF ESCAPING FROM ALCATRAZ?

(I) Beauty of the course. (Of course!)
(II) Challenge surrounding the swim which was for most of the century filled with legend regarding the impossibility of escaping the island's prison and surviving the cold, currents, and human-eating sharks. There is no record of sharks which are a threat to people, although I still have trouble believing this! (And if there really are no predatory sharks, what do they know that we don't about swimming in the Bay?); and
(III) You will impress just about anybody when you tell them you swam from Alcatraz (except your fellow hardcore triathlete and open-water swimmer friends who regularly kick your ass).

SWIM TIPS

Practice swimming in the Bay at least once per week before the race, and experiment well with what will keep your goggles from getting fogged up—I ended up just having to relax and stop every twenty strokes to clear mine out last year so I could see the various siting targets to head in at the right angles. A lot of a successful Alcatraz swim is about taking advantage of fast currents working in your favor. Look out for landmark siting advice from Pedro Ordenes, internationally-known open water swimmer extraordinaire. If you are a pretty fast swimmer, be aggressive with the siting targets—e.g., instead of targeting the Two Towers above Aquatic Park, aim for Fort Mason first before switching to the Palace of Fine Arts.

BIKE TIPS

This is not the time to wing it—do the course at least once. If you can, do the fairly technical and very hilly course over and over to get to know each turn and

descent and to get used to switching your gears a lot as you maintain a fast cadence. If you are new to or not confident about descents, be patient and slow down on these.

RUN TIPS

The trail portion on the far side of the Golden Gate Bridge can get quite narrow. I got blocked in a number of times behind somebody bonking and holding up a whole string of people, which made me lose time where I could have run comfortably at a faster pace. Know this portion of the course well, and before entering a narrow trail area, it is worth it to surge to pass a lot of people so you don't get stuck in a whole line impossible to pass.

On the sand ladder, I don't look up once I begin until it starts flattening out. Psychologically, it is far easier to meditate on each single step and next footprint ahead. If there is ever a time to focus sharply on the present moment, this is it. I do NOT recommend peeking to see how far there is to go. (Yup, it is LO-O-ONG and steep.) No need for a sinking flash of despair with the second half of the run to go!

TRANSITION TIPS

I recommend opting for the use of two pairs of running shoes during the race. Take the time to put on one pair out of the swim instead of running the distance to transition in bare feet. Your feet will be numb and unfeeling, but it's not a short run. You could easily overstress your legs from slapping around on hard asphalt or even cut your feet here without shoes. Have a different pair ready for T3 because these will be full of wet sand or in case your shoes were somehow not ready for you out of the swim.

If you wear contacts, put an extra one in your transition bag. You never know—I lost one at LA last autumn in the waves.

ANYTHING ELSE?

Check your bike equipment very carefully before getting
(continued on page 4)

Wildflower Relived

It was a dark and stormy night. This isn't the start for the latest bestseller, this is race night. Friday night, tents lashed down, tarps whipping in the wind, rain forming rivers through the campground. As I lie in what is now a waterbed, I slowly drift off to sleep. Race morning, sunny skies, 70 degrees at the start, water a balmy 68 degrees. Then I woke up. It was pouring out, 40 degrees, winds breaking tents and tarps free. Several early risers were out corralling "tumbleweed tents", the record for GGTC was a roll of nearly 150 yards! Fellow GGTC member Jojo summed up the day, words I'll never forget, "Dude, it's race day!"

Gear bag loaded, bike adjustments done, I hopped on my bike and headed to the start. Riding through GGTC camp I already felt like a hero. I've only been a member of GGTC for 6 months, but I'm already part of the GGTC family. Members lined the outer loop of the campground as if I were heading off on a year-long trek.

The rain broke, a hint of blue sky allowed a sliver of sunshine to ray through. Myself and 2600 others setup our transitions. Ten minutes to go, the announcers fill the air with excitement. De Boom, Widoff, Gollnick, Fuhr, GGTC's Sears, and the other pros were all starting their warm up. I quickly hosed myself with Pam, slapped on the wetsuit, and hit the start. The crowd erupted with cheers. Wave after wave we hit the water. The first hundred yards you jockey for position, line up buoys, and wonder if the sea-monster is what's grabbing your feet. Halfway into the swim the storm was back, stronger than ever. As I trudged through the storm into transition, my thoughts were only "Dude, it's race day!"

Alcatraz Tips from a GGTCer (con.)

on the Hornblower shuttle—I was DQ'ed last year because an aerobar plug fell off my new bars between taking my bike off my car and racking the bike. All that training! Don't let the same disappointment happen to you.

This is the beginning of Diana's Sankovic second year in triathlon. She is pleased to be a member of GGTC's

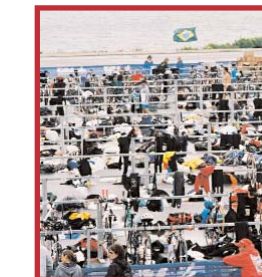
Rain, wind, dead squirrels, I managed to turn the corner at mile 20 and the skies parted. Flat and fast until the next hurdle, Le Degre Mechant (to us less cultured literates, Nasty Grade.) It starts gradually, but then hits you on one left turn. There it is, right in front of you, straight up to be exact. After that, mostly downhill (well deserved I must say.) My only setback, albeit minor, was when my water decided to rattle loose and launch my Cateye to an unfortunate demise. From mile 54 to the end, an enthusiastic crowd gave you the motivation you needed to be a star. I flew into T2, threw my bike on the rack, slapped on the running shoes, "Dude, it's race day!"

The run had more blue sky than clouds, roads and people were drying out, the energy started to explode. The first mile the legs stretch out, past the naked aid station we go. Then it hits you, up Beach Road hill we climb. Five miles down, at the top of Lynch Canyon Road several GGTC'ers cheering on, random onlookers, "Go number 622." I get to the bottom, turn the corner to the finish, open into a sprint, and I hear, "One more lap to go buddy!" Damn, back past the naked aid station once again. The second lap flew by, cheers roaring, teammates yelling, and finally crossing the finish line. We did it is what I thought, everyone made this race possible.

I'm not a pro, I'm not a top age grouper, but I am a tri-athlete. Along with 2600 other people that day, I know what it feels like to win. After all, "Dude, it's race day!"

*Andy Myers
Golden Gate Triathlon Club*

Podium Program and has lived in San Francisco for almost three years. After taking time off last summer when she trained full-time, she is working on combining a demanding career and athletic goals effectively. Her interests include yoga, politics & international affairs, investment, painting... and partying with friends and meeting new people as much as possible.



BIKE

We have different rides every weekend. The rides for the following weekend are posted to the mailing list. Here is just one of the rides we offer:

Paradise Loop Ride

Distance: ~35 miles
Hilliness 1/5
Route: Golden Gate Bridge, Sausalito town center, Sausalito bike paths, Camino Alto (stopping at the bottom to regroup), Corte Madera, across HWY 101, Paradise Drive to Tiburon. Coffee stop at Boudin's. Follow Tiburon Boulevard and the Bayside bike paths back to the Northern end of the Sausalito bike paths, and then back the way you came to get to the Bridge.

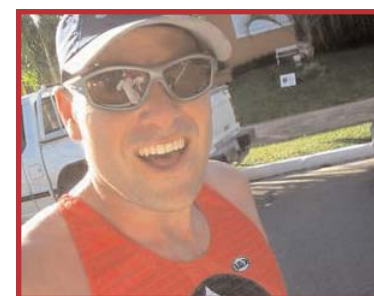
June Basic Skills Series

Learn the basics - Good bike handling skills are essential to every triathlete!

Location: Treasure Island
Dates: Basic: Part 1-June 14th or June 15th Basic: Part 2-June 20th or June 21st Basic: Part 3-June 28th or June 29th

Times: Saturday 11:00 am or 2:00 pm/Sunday 11:00 am or 2:00 pm
check out ggtc.org for more details

Questions/Comments/Concerns?
Contact the Bike Director at
jojo.grover@ggtc.org



Congratulations JoJo, Ironman Brazil Finisher!

"I may have not broken any land speed records, but I had a great time completing my first ironman. Next year I'll smoke 'em for sure."

- JoJo Grover

Some important rules, thanks Cathy Morgan!

- Your helmet must be on and buckled before you take the bike off the rack
- Ride to the right at all times, unless passing.
- When passing, make sure you are well past the other cyclist before cutting in.
- There is no drafting in triathlon.
- If you have to stop for some reason, move to the side of the road.
- Make sure all your equipment is in good mechanical order and everything is attached nice and tight.

For a list of complete USAT rules check www.usatriathlon.org

