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**Tri Gulf Coast:** We need your help! This is a small club with a handful of board members. We are trying to increase the quantity and quality of club events but we can't do it alone. If you are able to assist or want to be a board member, send e-mail to [president@trigulfcoast.org](mailto:president@trigulfcoast.org).

# Tri Gulf Coast

**TRI GULF COAST: A NON-PROFIT TRIATHLON CLUB SUPPORTING TRIATHLETES ACROSS THE GULF COAST**

**We are people who win races, and people who haven't done one yet. We're training for yet another Ironman, and we're thinking about trying a sprint race. We've got \$4000 Bikes, and we've got \$50 bikes. Some of us can swim across Pensacola Bay, and some of us are working on swimming 400 yards non-stop. Some of us can run a 10k in less time than others can run a 5k. In other words, if you're fast, slow, new, or experienced, you'll fit in just fine here.**

## *Pensacola Triathlon Club*

**We need your help!** This club cannot survive without your support. We need board members, help with the web page and help with organizing and staffing events. e-mail [president@trigulfcoast.org](mailto:president@trigulfcoast.org)





## Do YOU want to get involved ?

*Everyone is welcome at our board meetings held the 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of every month at 6:00 pm at Running Wild. If you would like to be a board member or just lend a hand, send an e-mail to:*

[President@TriGulfCoast.org](mailto:President@TriGulfCoast.org)

**CONSISTENCY  
AND QUALITY:**  
The keys to  
success!



# PASSING THE TORCH

By: Tom Henderson

Part of the festivities leading up to each Olympics games that I've always found interesting is the running of the torch from Olympia, Greece to the host city. Honored participants from all over the world participate in a grand relay across cities, countries, continents, and oceans. Can you imagine what it would be like to get to carry that torch? What an honor that would be! However, what if you reached the end of your relay segment, and there was no one there to take the torch from you? I'm guessing the triathlete in you would continue on, determined to see that the torch reaches its' destination. Eventually though, someone would have to relieve you. After all, it's just too big of a job for one person, or even several to complete on their own. In a way, that's where Tri Gulf Coast is today. We have a fantastic group of people with a common interest in helping to grow and promote our great sport. We have the perfect environment to train and race in, give or take the occasional hurricane. But only a few have served on the board or as officers, volunteered to organize an event, or written an article for the newsletter. Those who have are ready for some help. Some of them will need to pass the torch very soon, and unless someone is there to take it, Tri Gulf Coast's days may be numbered. Mike Prevost, our skilled editor who has produced newsletters for the past year, is about to move from the area. John Harrison will soon move to Fairhope and will no longer be able to serve as our treasurer and membership chair. Both will be sorely missed, and the services they've done for TriGC must continue if we are to maintain a club. It's not all bad news by any means! Stephen Hancock and a soon to be named volunteer have stepped up to coordinate Kids Camp this summer. Stephen will also picking up Rob Zimmerman's torch to put on the Mere Mortals training group. Rob is still serving as our President, Tom Henderson as VP, and Wendy McIntosh is our secretary and keeps us all on track. We have several others who continue to step up to serve as board members and to coordinate events. The fact is, it takes many more people than that to manage everything we do, much less to achieve some of the goals we'd like to in the future. Some may feel that their involvement ends at the \$15 dues they pay each year, or even that the club owes them something in return for those dues. Actually, if you participate in Mere Mortals, the Members-only Tri, our socials, and take advantage of the discounts offered to members at Swim-n-stuff, Running Wild, Dragon Sports, Bikes Plus, and Truly Spokin, you have turned a healthy profit on your annual membership. If you are a couple or family member, your profit is even greater! So, the time has come to decide if you want Tri Gulf Coast to continue. Below is a short list of the areas we need more people to help with. Take the time now to type a quick email to [volunteer@trigulfcoast.org](mailto:volunteer@trigulfcoast.org). Don't limit yourself to just the list below, feel free to contribute your ideas as well as your time! Before the end of May, we'll schedule a board meeting with all of those who've volunteered. I hope you've enjoyed the past several years of Tri Gulf Coast, and with your help, I hope we have many more! A partial list of where you can help:

- Treasurer
- Membership coordinator
- Newsletter editor
- Numerous volunteers for kids' camp
- Speakers/helpers/mentors for Mere Mortals
- Bike workshop coordinator
- Run Clinic coordinator
- Members only Tri director
- Summer social coordinator
- Members only duathlon director
- Holiday Social coordinator
- Newsletter articles

# SPARKS THOSE WHO INSPIRE US

*By: Johnny H*

We are truly fortunate. In our relatively small community, we have a multitude of individuals and organizations that provide us with the opportunity and inspiration to lead a healthier lifestyle. I like to think of these folks and organization as sparks. For me, one of the big sparks was Ann and Charlie Knight, founders of the Santa Rosa Island Triathlon. I had never done a triathlon and the thought of just completing one seem audacious. But there it was, a triathlon in our backyard. I knew people who completed it, and I knew of people who could help me get ready. My wife, Lisa, had completed the race on a mountain bike and encouraged me to enter. However without the race being so close, I doubt I would have entertained the thought completing a triathlon. It was the spark that slowly changed by lifestyle for the better. I am in better shape, eat better, sleep better, drink less, and feel I am a better role model for my children. But without Ann and Charlie providing the opportunity, that spark, it may not have happened. They probably have no idea what effect they had on me.

Another spark in our community is Paul Epstein of Running Wild and the Pensacola Marathon. I know of several people who set this half marathon or marathon as their goal to complete. They lost weight, eat better and are in better shape. Heck, they just seem happier. But without Paul and the Running Wild gang's tireless effort to put on the race, it may not have happened. They were the spark for a positive change in many lives.

The sparks don't stop with Ann and Paul. We have so many. Our club – Tri Gulf Coast – with the Mere Mortals training group and Members Only races Don Davis and the West Florida Wheelman. The entire Pensacola Runners Association. It is remarkable how many well run races we have in Pensacola. You can almost race every weekend of the year. Grace Ruckstuhl – who has helped just about all of us with swimming. The list goes on and on.

Then there are folks who just inspire us through their lifestyle and work ethic. Staying with the metaphors – we could call them the ambers. They lead by example. Keep the fire going. They attend most group training events and races. Ever been around Happy Mike McComb, Doug Jones, John Murray or Meri Asmar and not get pumped up. Their positive attitude is infectious. Then, we have the grand masters who are going strong and looking good. Every race, I look around and say to myself "Hope I can look and race like that at their age". You just want to take their picture and run an ad in the Pensacola News Journal with the statement "Get off your fat butts, and start working out! Look at these Grand Master Triathletes!! You can do it too!!!".

Getting hardware in races is great. Really great. Love that age group brackets setup. Whoever started giving awards for age groupers inspired a lot of people. But the real winners in the races are the folks who made the biggest lifestyle change. It may be the person who previously could not run a block but just completed a 5K. It could be the person who had a previous heart attack or other illness. It could be the person who just lost 50 pounds. Or it may the person who, for the first time in a long time, feels like an athlete.

Since we are triathletes, we set the example and we inspire others. Whether we know it not. Think about it. Set a better example. Say thanks to the folks who inspired you!

## RED HILLS RACE REPORT

*By: Johnny H.*

Racing season kicked off with the Red Hills Triathlon in Tallahassee on March 25. This is a great small race. The race is set in the beautiful McClay Gardens State park. The spring fed Lake Hall is clean and tree lined. The bike course is rolling and lined with giant Live Oaks dripping with Spanish Moss. The run is within the park and on trails for over half the race. The race is well organized with computer chip timing, food, massages, good race T-shirts and freebies (insulated water bottles and Gels). The awards consist of nice pottery with a constant theme from year to year. So if you are fortunate enough to win an award in different years, you can accumulate a set.

What else could you want in a race?

Well, for one thing, it could have been frickin' warmer. Race time air temperature was around 42 degrees with lake temperature around 62 degrees. The lake felt warm compared to the air. Even with wet suits, this was the coldest triathlon I

have ever done. It has been warm in years past, but we hit an unusual cold snap this year. Once you started swimming, you were fine. T1 was different. Cold hands and feet made it tough to put on clothes especially gloves. Some serious racers forgo much in clothing for a quick T1. They were cold, but warmed up by the end of the bike. On the run, most folks had num feet for the first mile or so. But again, they warmed up. Actually by the time the run started, it was perfect running conditions.

The race is billed as “The toughest Sprint in Florida – Are you Tough Enough?” Good marketing, but an exaggeration. Since they used this theme in years past, I assume they are not referring to this year’s temperature. The swim is great – clean, wet suit legal and a little short :-). The bike is beautiful and really rolling. The rollers are not bad since the up hills are usually preceded by a good down hill. Thus you can get up speed going into the inclines. The run is mostly on good trails and has a down hill finish.

The race must not have been that tough because Tri Gulf Coast members kicked butt. See picture. Almost all Tri Gulf Coast members left with hardware and Don Davis lead the charge by winning masters.

If you plan to race Red Hills next year, (which I highly recommend), there are a few things to keep in mind. First, bring a wet suit. Second, get to the race early or you end up parking a mile away (really). If you get there early, you can park a half mile away. Third, it is in a State Park and there are no street lights. So when you get there at 6:00 EST or so, it is pitch dark for your hike or ride to the transition area. Bring a flashlight. Fourth, Tallahassee is on Eastern Standard Time. Lastly, see #1, bring a wet suit.

Good Race.

# THAT WHICH DOES NOT KILL YOU MAKES YOU STRONGER

*By: Brian Casey*

Like most triathletes, I’d seen that saying on T-shirts hundreds of times. But, the morning of April 16, 2005, as I headed out for a workout, I certainly wasn’t thinking about dying. I had turned 50 a few months earlier, and was looking forward to racing in a slightly less competitive age group during the upcoming season. I hit the Blackwater Heritage Trail about nine-o’clock for an 18-mile ride/3-mile run “brick” workout. About one-half mile into the ride, I realized I had left my wallet and cell phone in the car. I thought about going back to get them, but decided against it. After all, I had done this same ride hundreds of times before with no problems. Near the end of the trail, I turned onto a rural road, hit my turnaround, and headed back. So far, I was enjoying the ride, the exercise, the fresh air, and the scenery.

In an instant, my enjoyment came to an end. On a narrow stretch of road, I was startled by a large dog that came out of a hidden driveway only about 20 feet ahead of me. The dog angled in front of me to cut me off as he came towards me with fangs bared. I yelled at him to go home and tried to squirt him with my water bottle, but to no avail. Suddenly, I realized I was running out of road. I turned my attention back to the front, saw I was about to hit a couple of mailboxes, and pulled the handlebars back to the left. I hit the dog and went over the bars, landing on my head with a violent impact.

When I came to, I was lying on my right side with my right arm over my head and my face in my armpit. I initially thought I had broken my shoulder. I rolled onto my back and realized my shoulder was fine. I could move all my extremities and had no loss of sensation. Within seconds, some roofers who were working on a nearby house were at my side. They told me they had seen me hit the ground and had already called 911. Soon, the Whiting Field Fire Department showed up and placed me on a backboard with my head and neck immobilized. After a lengthy wait, the ambulance arrived. Also arriving at the scene was the county Animal Control officer, who took witness statements and photographs. I told the ambulance personnel to take me to the local hospital. My wife retrieved my wallet and bike and met me at the ER.

At the ER, X-rays and CT scans were performed. The ER doctor diagnosed me with a “neck strain” and sent me home with a soft cervical collar, some pain pills, and some muscle relaxers. I went home to spend a very uncomfortable night sleeping in an easy chair, after removing my soft collar long enough to take a shower. About 10 o’clock the next morning, we received a phone call from the hospital. My wife answered the phone, and was told that a radiologist had found some fractures on my neck X-rays. She was told to get me to lie down immediately and not move until an ambulance arrived.

When the ambulance arrived, I was again placed on a backboard and this time taken to a hospital in Pensacola. After more X-rays, CT scans, and an MRI, I was informed I had the same type neck fracture as Christopher Reeve and was extremely lucky to be alive and not paralyzed. I had a “burst fracture,” with four breaks in the first cervical vertebra and one break in the second cervical vertebra. The neurosurgeon informed me that I would have to wear a halo brace for about 12 weeks. The next day, the brace was fitted, and I spent another three days in the hospital for adjustments and therapy. Before I was released, I found out I would have to undergo surgery at yet another hospital 10 days later. That operation would be to place a 2-inch long screw into the second cervical vertebra to fix the fracture in it. If that surgery was unsuccessful, both the broken vertebrae would have to be fused together and I would lose most of the ability to rotate my head.

I went home to await my next surgery, and began to learn to live in the halo. I was concerned about losing all fitness as swimming, running, cycling, or lifting weights were ruled out. I would have to get my exercise through walking and riding an exercise bike. Showers and baths were also out. All bathing had to be done by means of a damp washcloth. The day for my next surgery came, and when I awoke in the recovery room, I was ecstatic to learn that the operation was successful. Up to this point, I had been hesitant to think about returning to triathlon competition, least of all riding a bike. Now that my chances for a recovery looked good, I pledged to myself I would make a comeback as soon as I was able.

The following week, I began “telecommuting” to work via phone and laptop about 3-4 hours a day. Within two weeks, I was back at work for 6-7 hours a day. After another two weeks, I was working full 8-hour days. I received tremendous support during these early stages of my recovery from many sources. My story made the rounds of the local swimming, cycling, running, and triathlon circles and I got dozens of get-well cards, emails, and visits. I was on prayer lists at multiple churches. I was being driven to and from work by several coworkers. Of course, my wife of 26 years and my family were my main source of support. Despite my physical condition, I was feeling pretty upbeat emotionally. I was walking three to six miles daily by now, and riding my exercise bike on rainy days, so physically I was feeling stronger also. But, I still had some low moments, particularly when Hurricane Dennis hit and I had to rely on others to make prepare our house for the storm.

During my recovery period, I tried to keep up a normal existence as best as possible. My wife and I kept up our Saturday “date nights”—we even got out on the dance floor a time or two, and we went to concerts in Seville Square. I began to really miss my athletic endeavors, though. I remember watching the Tour de France coverage one evening and going out to the garage during a commercial break to stare longingly at my bikes hanging on the wall.

Fourteen weeks after my accident the halo was removed. I had to wear a semi-rigid neck brace for another six weeks, but at least I could shower and get in a pool. At my next follow-up, I was cleared to stop wearing the brace and to start physical therapy. The doctor also okayed biking, swimming and driving, but no running. I immediately decided I would get it over with and ride my bike that coming Saturday morning. For the first mile or two, I rode a little tentatively. But, three miles into the ride, I felt very comfortable and natural. I finished the 18-mile ride uneventfully, feeling tired but happy when I pulled back in to the parking lot.

My physical therapy was going well by now. I was rapidly regaining strength and mobility in my neck. I continued to ride my bike some, had gotten in a few laps of swimming, and had started some light jogging by early November. After a breakfast with the PJC masters swimming team, I decided to enter the “Hooked on Swimming” mile swim at the Cecil Hunter Pool the next day. My neck was still a little painful during the freestyle, but breaststroke wasn’t too bad. I swam about three lengths of freestyle and then one of breaststroke most of the way and finished the swim in just under 30 minutes.

On November 18<sup>th</sup>, I finally heard the words I had been waiting seven months for. The doctor told me that my neck was healed! I wanted to head home and tell my wife the good news immediately. But instead, I headed directly to Seville Quarter to sign up for the Turkey Trot 5K the next morning. When I got home after registering, I did a little carbo-loading and celebrating with some pizza and a couple of beers, laid out my running gear, and hit the sack. My race goal was just to finish without any stopping to rest or walk and not to hurt myself. My first mile took almost 9 minutes, but my second mile (aided by a tailwind) improved to about a 7:30 pace. I finished with a time of 24:35, which I would have considered terrible a year earlier, but was very happy with.

Since November, I have competed in three additional 5K and one 10K races, one masters swim meet, and a 40K bicycle race. As I type this story, I have less than two days until my first triathlon since the summer of 2004. It has now been one year since my accident. Through my recovery, several things kept me going—my faith, my family, my friends, and the goal of competing in a triathlon again. No, my accident did not kill me, thanks to the grace of God. I am not yet physically stronger, but I am stronger spiritually, mentally, and in my relationships with family and friends. Every day I thank God for the miracles I received—that I’m not dead or paralyzed and can continue to swim, bike and run even though I’m a little bit slower. I’ll see you all at the races, and remember, be careful out there.

## MERE MORTALS

*By: Steve Hancock*

Mark your calendars! June 11<sup>th</sup> will be the first meeting of the Mere Mortals training group at Casino Beach. We will meet at 6:30am and have a short intro to the program and go for a 30 minute run for our first workout. We should be wrapping things up by 8:00am.

Once again, TrainingPeaks.com is sponsoring the Mere Mortals and providing their full subscription service to us at no charge. We will be using TrainingPeaks.com for your plan delivery. You will be able to record your workout data in your very own account. And, once the training has completed, you can still use the free Log Only version of TrainingPeaks to continue recording your data or you can subscribe with a 20% discount. TrainingPeaks is donating this service, valued at \$80 an athlete, once again to help make this season a success!

What do I need for the first meeting?

All participants should be members of Tri Gulf Coast. If you are new to Mere Mortals or need to renew your membership, please bring \$15 (check or cash) for an individual membership or \$20 for a family membership.

Your running gear - Shoes, Shorts, Shirt, Sunscreen, and a hat.

Hydration – bring your favorite drink or a bottle to fill with water. We will have water available for during and after your workouts.

We will a little paper work to take care of at the first meeting. If you were training with Mere Mortals last year and had a TrainingPeaks account, we will be getting your information to reactivate your account for this season. If you are joining us for the first time, we will be getting the information needed to setup your account for you. We will also be passing out the waivers for you to sign and turn in.

This season, we will have 2 levels of plans designed by Stephen Hancock, a Level 1 USA Triathlon coach and Level 2 USA Cycling coach. Stephen will be donating his coaching services once again to the group this year as he takes the reigns and tries to live up to the great job Rob Zimmerman has done in the past. Stephen will be heading up the training sessions, building and delivering your training plan (via your TrainingPeaks account), and available for you should you have any questions throughout the training sessions.

We are already lining up some great speakers and are once again looking forward to another fantastic training group. If you would like more information about the group, please contact Stephen at 850.346.9521.

## TGC CALENDAR

January Bd Mtg  
February Bd Mtg  
March – Swim Clinic at PJC  
Bd Mtg  
April 19 Bd Mtg;  
30 General Member Mtg and equipment swap at Cancun’s Gulf Breeze  
swim clinic date not set (was Easter and has to be changed)  
May 17 Bd Mtg  
Bike Workshop date not set  
Swim clinic date not set (was Mother’s day and has to be changed)  
June 11 Mere Mortals begins  
Kid’s Camp either the week of the 19<sup>th</sup> or 26<sup>th</sup>;  
21 Bd Mtg (will change if Kid’s camp falls this week)  
18 Swim Clinic (date subject to change as it is Fathers Day)  
July 19 Bd Mtg  
23 Members only Tri and Social afterwards;  
August 16 Bd Mtg  
20 Run Clinic tentative date – will confirm with Paul Epstein;  
September 20 Bd Mtg  
October 18 Bd Mtg  
22 Duathlon and general membership meeting;  
November 15 Bd Mtg  
11 Ironman Volunteer Group;  
December 9 X-mas Social 5:00pm;

Most endurance athletes have a far lower tolerance for tempo and higher intensity than they think. As a result, illness/injury/burnout result and impair consistency. Due to the fundamental nature of consistency, the inconsistent athlete experiences a results plateau.

Remember that getting tired is the point of training. Fatigue yourself with aerobic training. Once you are tired use total rest (best for novices) and active recovery/skills work (best for elites and experienced athletes) for restoration purposes.

**Coach Gordo Byrr**

Most experts agree that to finish an Ironman, you need to have accomplished the following at least ONCE before race day: 4km swim, 6 hour bike, 2.5 to 3 hour run and 6+ hour brick. Therefore, rather than focusing on weekly hours, focus on a sensible progression of smaller "events" that lead to the successful completion of these larger EVENTS at least one time before race day. I call these larger training events "Training Milestones," or events that we must accomplish in route to a successful race.

**Coach Rich Strauss**

Not sure if you need to renew? Send an e-mail to [treasurer@trigulfcoast.org](mailto:treasurer@trigulfcoast.org)

## Tri Gulf Coast



## Swim Clinic

**Date: May 28, 2006 (PJC)**  
**August 20th, 2006 (PJC)**  
**September 24th (Open Water)**

**Time: 10:00-2:00 PM**

**Place: Pensacola Junior College Pool**

Gulf Coast Tri host the 2006 Swim Stroke Series at PJC pool. The clinic is conducted to better your swim time. The group will learn drills and areas of concentration for further improvement. Cost is : \$ 50.00 for each clinic.

### Highlights

- Stroke Work
- Video Analysis
- Workout Development and Planning

**Contact person: Stephen Hancock**

Phone: 850-346-9521

Email: [coach@ironvision.com](mailto:coach@ironvision.com)

15 slots available per clinic.

All clinics open to Tri Gulf Coast members.  
Please visit <http://www.trigulfcoast.org/>  
for membership details.

## Club jerseys and Tri racing gear?

The board discussed the idea but we need some help with logo design and it would be great if someone volunteered to lead the effort. There are many of us who would like to purchase Tri Gulf Coast racing gear but we need someone to lead the effort. Please lend a hand if you can!

## New Race in the Area!

I am looking for volunteers to help in organizing a new race in the area. The race "may" be an Aquathon (run, swim, run) and it will benefit the Center for Independent Living. Anyone who would like to help out can contact me at [bcasev1@bellsouth.net](mailto:bcasev1@bellsouth.net).

Fill out the form and mail the form and your check to:

**TRI Gulfcoast**  
**PO Box 544**  
**Gulf Breeze, FL 32562-0544**

Membership Form

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Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone # (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_\_ USAT # \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

New Member or  Renewal  Individual Membership (\$15.00)  Family Membership (\$20.00)

	Name	Birth Date
For family Membership, list additional family members and birth dates:		

I agree to abide by all decisions made by the club and its board. I understand and assume all risks associated while participating in all club sponsored events. I will not participate unless I am medically fit and properly trained. Having read this waiver and knowing these facts and in consideration of the acceptance of my application for membership, I, for myself and anyone entitled to act on my behalf, waive and release TRI Gulf Coast and all sponsors, their representatives and successors from all claims or liabilities of any kind arising out of my participation in these club activities even though that liability may arise out of negligence or carelessness on the part of persons named in this waiver.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian if under 18: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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