

RAINING THREE'S BEFORE THE STORM



TOM SKULSKI/STEAMBOAT PILOT & TODAY

Brothers Daniel and Gabe Rodriguez shoot hoops at Howelsen Hill on Thursday just ahead of an afternoon storm.

Steamboat swim coach retires after 23 years

Tom Skulski
Steamboat Pilot & Today

A legendary figure in the Steamboat Springs swimming community, Patti Worsley, is retiring after 23 years of coaching.

In 1999, Worsley joined the Steamboat Springs Swim Team, which was a summer-only team known as the Lightning swim team, as a part-time coach. Since then, Worsley has become the head coach and seen the team change its name and expand to a year-round schedule.

Worsley has been instrumental in the growth of her swimmers, and she takes great pride in the people they become.

"Helping kids set goals, believe in themselves and achieve their goals inside and out of the pool, that's really important to me," Worsley said.

Worsley believes her strong suit as a coach is helping her athletes with their technique in the swimming pool. She helped to instill these techniques into both of her sons, who have gone on to have extremely successful careers in the pool.

Worsley has coached state champions, All-Americans, Swimmers of the Year and even Olympians, but some of her favorite career memories come from the little things.

Seeing the joy on her students' faces after they successfully do a flip turn or any



PATTI WORSLEY/COURTESY PHOTO

Patti Worsley and her swim team pose for a photo at the Old Town Hot Springs.

other skill for the first time is something Worsley will look back at and remember most fondly.

"I just love coaching swimming, I feel like it's my passion in life, and I can see things that need to be helped with each

swimmer and how we can have them be a faster and a better swimmer," Worsley said. "I feel like I have an eye for seeing it and I just love doing it."

WORSLEY, 22

SPORTS COLUMN

Community effort results in new signs for Emerald Mountain

Have you seen the 15 new signs that Routt County Riders and volunteers put up on Emerald Mountain earlier this summer? This was an incredibly rewarding project for Routt



SPOKE TALK

County Riders that really represents the efforts of many to make this local gem such a special place for our community.

You've likely ridden **MGM** trail, named after Mica, Gretchen, and Mark. Mica was an Australian shepherd that frequently enjoyed the trails that her owners, Gretchen and Mark Sehlner, were widely responsible for conceptualizing and constructing.

Gretchen, formerly the Town Challenge race director, wanted better trails on Emerald to help draw in more riders and improve their experience. A lifetime spent in the mountains and a husband who loved racing provided her with the vision for a more elaborate trail system. She had the consistent fight within her to make it happen.

"If I say, 'Yes,' will you leave me alone?" was the answer from Jeff Nelson, the open space manager for the City of Steamboat Springs Parks and Recreation, after finally caving to Gretchen's relentless requests to build more trails. At the time, racers were charging up and down the Howelsen ski runs, and Gretchen envisioned something bigger.

At first, Gretchen and Mark were limited to using the Nordic trail system to build the new, permitted, trails. The first shovels moved dirt to create a reroute on Bluffs Loop to help control erosion. Soon after, the city purchased more land from Lyman Orton, whose backyard was also part of the race and featured steep climbs and rutted descents. Gretchen and Mark quickly got to work, using tools borrowed from the city. They put in more reroutes and new trails that began to zig-zag across the meadow and up the hillside. Next came the trail names.

Lyman Orton named **Orton Meadows**, which was formerly his property line. **Hudson** was named after a rusted 1932 Hudson car still hidden in the pines. Larry Johnson, formerly on the board of Routt County Riders and responsible for the introduction of Lyman to parks and recreation, broke his shoulder on a section of trail that is now named in his honor, **Larry's**. On sunset strolls, Abby, another Australian shepherd, would constantly turn right into the woods at one particular spot,

MOUNTAIN, A22



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WORSLEY

From page 21

Worsley first found her love for swimming as a child growing up in Vancouver, Canada. Her father worked in the plastic industry and his company made swimming goggles.

Worsley swam through high school and grew a strong passion for the sport. She has since been able to share that passion with her students, a few of whom have returned to coach alongside her.

Brooks Birkinbine swam under Worsley's tutelage for eight years and returned to the swim team as a coach the last two summers while on summer break from college.

Birkinbine, 21, learned about Worsley's retirement and faced a wide variety of emotions.

"I was sad at first just because she has been a part of my life for so long and I see her as an extension of my family at this point," Birkinbine said. "Then, the more I started thinking about it, the more I was just super proud of her for all that she has done for me and the other athletes on the team and just everything she has done swim-wise herself."

Like all of Worsley's students, Birkinbine looks forward to continuing a friendship with Worsley after her

retirement and can't wait to see where the next chapter of her life takes her.

She is most looking forward to traveling, spending time with friends, getting back on her Peloton and continuing to make the world a better place. On top of that, Worsley will pop into the Old Town Hot Springs a few times this fall to teach private lessons with some of her swimmers that are looking to work on specific techniques.

As Worsley's tenure comes to a close, her final meet as a coach will be the Long Course 12 and Under State Meet hosted at the U.S. Air Force Academy from July 29-31.

This was the very first meet Worsley took her son to many years ago, and she is now poetically finishing her career in the very same place.

With the retirement comes a search for a new coach who can fill Worsley's enormous shoes. No replacement has yet been named, but there are enough assistant coaches to cover the team through the fall.

"Steamboat is a great community to be working in. The coaches that we have on staff right now are excellent and would be able to work with a new coach coming in and it's just a great community to develop swimmers, it really is," Worsley said.



ROUTT COUNTY RIDERS/COURTESY PHOTO

Fifteen new signs, made by a pair of Steamboat Springs High School students, are now in place on Emerald Mountain.

MOUNTAIN

From page 21

thus "walking the line" that is now **Abby's**. A particularly steep, straight-up-and-down section of the Town Challenge was colloquially referred to as **Stairway to Heaven** by the racers, and the name stuck.

After the city deemed a publicly built trail unsafe and asked Gretchen and Mark to make improvements, "Blues Bridges" became **No Mo Blues**. Some trail names need no explanation; **Root Canal** — so rooty it will shake your teeth out, and **Angry Grouse** — named for an angry grouse that attacked Gretchen during the building of the trail. **Wild Rose**

is named after the Wild Rose Ranch, which was a dairy farm at the bottom of Emerald Mountain in the 1800s.

Original trail signs were built, carved and placed by Mark, while the new signs were built by Steamboat Springs High School wood shop students, Wyatt Shaw and Degan Kuntz, using cedar donated by Alpine Lumber.

Routt County Riders is proud to have facilitated this project which is so deeply rooted in the community. Thank you to all who made it possible.

Kat Ciamaichelo is the program and events coordinator at Routt County Riders.

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