



Diana Nyad Xtreme Dream 103 miles. Cuba to Florida. Summer 2011

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Xtreme Dreaming: An Unfolding Story

POSTED BY XTREME DREAM TEAM ON AUG 11, 2011 IN BLOG, SLIDER | 2 COMMENTS



Candace comforts Diana

Note from Diana's friend Candace: Can this story be told in a day, by a blog, by an article in a newspaper or magazine? I think not. Perhaps the universe was created in an instant, in a big bang, but it's taken us fallible humans ever since to work out what it means to live life. That story is ongoing. And so will be this blog, as Diana Nyad's extreme dreaming unfolds, revealing itself over the coming days and weeks and no doubt months. It's ongoing, and so is Diana's life, I am so thankful to be able to say.

And just so you know, she's already begun to do what she set out to do originally, "live life to its fullest." For her over the hours since she came out of the water, that has meant what? Sleeping? Resting? Eating all those things she denied herself while in training? Oh no, not our Diana. She'd been promising

Twitter Updates



- Here's a new video message directly from Diana to her fans on her [#XtremeDream!](#) <http://ow.ly/61DyR> [#fearless](#) about 1 hour ago from HootSuite
- Sign-up for the Xtreme Dream newsletter. Images and anecdotes that go beyond tweets! Click the icon on the left below Diana's pic!... about 23 hours ago from HootSuite
- View from Steve who was one of the observers on the swim. He's been a great supporter and friend all the way through. <http://ow.ly/606uO> 07:52:57 PM August 10, 2011 from HootSuite
- [@bond_dougbond](#) 103 miles! 06:27:16 PM August 10, 2011 from HootSuitein reply to [bond_dougbond](#)
- While we waiting for news from the Keys, hope you will all check pics from Xtreme Dream on our FB page! <https://www.facebook.com/DianaNyad> 03:21:32 PM August 10, 2011 from HootSuite
- "If we all leave this expedition doing the best job we could, we'll have succeeded." - Bonnie. [#diananyad](#)

the party for her crew (and for the friends scheduled to arrive in the middle for the celebration at the end, who hopped on a plane even after they heard it was over) and a party was what they were going to get. In fact, two already—the first on the evening of the day her swim dream ended—the second, last night. Thus the delay in bringing you into it, but believe me, though her for-now substitute blogger (me) [1,776 captures](#) 3 Jul 2010 – 17 Apr 2026

head came out of the water—through the CNN cameras, over phone interviews, in press conferences. Some of what she has to say will come soon today in the next blog, part of that press conference, word for word.

And then another blog later on tonight after that. And then the next day and the next. Diana lives large, and so have many of us had an opportunity to do through being a part of her dream, as well as otherwise. But be prepared. If this story has a beginning, a middle, and an end, you'll have to figure it out for yourself because it sure ain't gonna come that way to you from here. It's going to come in moments, in snapshots, from various angles and perspectives, unfolding. It will come together somehow, like the grandma's quilt that Diana Nyad threw off before jumping into the water.

DianaPressConf8_9.doc

– © Candace Lyle Hogan 8-11-11, 11 a.m.

An intense few days down in Key West

POSTED BY XTREME DREAM TEAM ON AUG 11, 2011 IN BLOG, SLIDER | 11 COMMENTS



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Diana addresses her friends and family

Photo by Christi Barli

This has certainly been an intense few days down in Key West. As you well know, from being on the first Cuba swim so many years ago. Bonnie Stoll was a truly amazing trainer for Diana on this swim, and Candace was there by Diana's side, too, as she was on the Cuba swim with you.

Of course Diana is intensely disappointed, and grieving the end of this particular dream effort. But as she put it "It's a disappointment, but not a failure." And certainly, from reading her facebook and twitter messages by the thousands from all over the world, it is clear that, almost unanimously, her feat (she swam nearly 55 miles over 29 hours in open water) is seen as an heroic effort that has inspired her many thousands of followers to think about how each one of them might make a commitment to some special effort in their own lives.

That has been her message from the beginning of this dream, and clearly, that message has gotten across. By the way, did you know that Hero was a woman? She was the one Leander swam to every night across the Hellespont in Greek mythology. She was his muse and inspiration. Sound like anyone you know?

I flew home this afternoon, but many of Diana's friends and crew are still there, probably until the weekend. Some were going out to swim with dolphins this afternoon, including Diana. I hope they all go out and dance themselves silly in one of the fabulous bars in Key West, before they leave. Diana is the best dancer I know. We had a ball in the 70's dancing our way around every bar in Manhattan.

And I hope there will be a big party for her, perhaps back in LA around her birthday on the 22nd? I wish I could be there, too.

As we all know, there is nothing like spending time with this incredible woman to make you feel alive

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her crew and friends last night. Just 18 hours after that amazing swim. Diana is truly a force of nature.

CNN will be broadcasting a 1 hour special about the swim and hopefully focusing on Diana's larger message of inspiration to the world, on Sept 17th. Sanjay Gupta is doing the story. CNN was on the boat for the entire swim. And I am sure all of you will hear from Diana very soon.

The Heroic journey is a long one, with many twists and turns, and it is far from over for Diana. Let's each of us recommit ourselves to taking that journey seriously in our own lives, in honor of her effort this week. That's the message she wants to send, as she said at her press conference after the swim. I'm starting today.

Onward, Jean

Jean Golden

Diana's been an inspiration to so many

POSTED BY XTREME DREAM TEAM ON AUG 9, 2011 IN BLOG | 10 COMMENTS



Back in the late 70s it must have been, I used to swim laps at the old Women's Y on Eighth Avenue in the 40s, maybe, in NYC. I was a scuba diver then and tried to keep in shape that way. This picture was taken on my first ever dive in the Bahamas in 1969.

One Saturday morning, I was swimming along with my jet fins and mask and snorkel, and became aware of a body in the next lane passing me as though I were standing still! That was pretty unusual, because I always swam with my fins and I was pretty quick.

When I got out of the pool, I asked one of the women who that was, and she said, Diana Nyad. I had heard your name around that time. . . maybe it was because of your swim around Manhattan. Then I went to shower, and you were there next to me. You paid me a great compliment which I have never forgotten.

Over the years since, I have seen you doing Olympics commentary and always remember that day.

With best wishes,

Marjorie Wheaton

Lessons from the swim, toward the future (8-9-11; 9AM)



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After 29 Hours Diana Calls The Swim

As the crew is motoring in to shore, we get a call: "This story is being covered worldwide, Sydney, Montreal, everywhere— Google just has 1400 articles about the end of the swim alone. Mostly it's about how much Diana's inspiring people." Of course, it is. Especially for the age group Diana intended to give heart to the most, she has succeeded. You think of success and failure differently after living a lifetime of it. How we define success or failure changes as we become mature and wiser and more accomplished. This was always about an attempt. This was always about the importance of reaching beyond your grasp. Of course, a shore to shore success would have been nice—it was what Diana wanted, passionately. There's no sugar coating for that; her disappointment is real. But for her contemporaries whom she so specifically addressed, this was always about the attempt, this was always about reach...about the courage to risk wanting anything passionately again—or maybe even for the first time.

Life teaches us that youthful success is easy. Success is incredibly accessible if you define it conveniently, as those second-rate compromises we settle for every day or as choosing safety over challenging yourself. Diana looked us in the eye and said with love but without equivocation, No, you can do better. You know you can. Get up, wake up, you can do whatever you set your mind to, or at least you can try. Diana wouldn't let us get away with using age as a rationalization for being tentative about challenging ourselves. This swim was about setting the bar low for an entire generation. It was about the importance of reaching beyond our grasp, whatever the day, whatever the outcome, about the courage to risk engaging in life with our best selves.

Candace Lyle Hogan and Elaine Lafferty

“Currents will be blowing us toward the Bahamas, so all night we'll be trying to pinch our way north.”-Navigator David





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About Yesterday morning (aug6) On Her Way to Cuba We found ourselves coming and going at the Key West airport at exactly the same time Sat. morning, in separate buildings. Diana Nyad and head swim handler Bonnie Stoll, on their way to Cuba at last, had already passed through security. Over the cell phone, Diana guided me along a row of taxis—"go outside, see the one with the sign on top, look through the window to your left of that." Through the window, I could see Diana, her sharply pressed tailored shorts below a snappy team t-shirt 103 Nyad Xtreme Dream, laughing and waving delightedly, looking just like she did more than 30 years ago. Fearless, on her way adventuring again, she is in her element, feeling good. Suddenly Bonnie came into the frame, waving and laughing, too, all those hours and miles of training behind them, the grueling grind, Diana slogging through the water, Bonnie attending to her from the boat, all done. Many hundreds of miles already done in training—Diana has swum thousands in her career—but the crucial and final ones just ahead: 103 miles from Cuba to Florida. It's inconceivable, unless you allow the possibility that what the human mind can accomplish may be limitless. Diana has had a lifetime of pushing her body beyond its seeming capacity—of extending her reach beyond its grasp—of looking fear in the face and laughing. And there she is as wide-eyed and confident as I saw her in 1978 when she swam 42 hours through the Gulf Stream, still going strong, when we had to force her from the water, our navigator having gone so far off course in bad weather that she could have stroked 100 more hours and never reached land. She wanted to go on then. And here she is, going on with it now.

This time, we're all hoping, it will be different. This time, she intends to go from shore to shore to greet those faces at the end, waving and laughing and loving such a dramatic reminder that people can and do accomplish what seems impossible.

Through the airport window I see them hopping up and down like a couple of ten year olds. It's a beautiful sight. That is the age of entitlement for a girl, the world open before her, she can do anything and all good things are possible. Looking happy, excited, on their way at last, Diana and Bonnie are reminding us there's a 10 year old alive in us still, and she can be gleeful even in the face of the challenges ahead.

– Candace Lyle Hogan

Centered and Ready – Before the Plunge!

POSTED BY XTREME DREAM TEAM ON AUG 8, 2011 IN BLOG | 2 COMMENTS





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Three and a half hours before the swim, at 4:15pm, outside Club Nautico, Diana takes me aside on the patio. She's talking to me but she's also talking to you: "I was pretty centered, and just now I'm beginning to feel the real adrenalin flowing. We had been planning for 3 days or so in Cuba, to be together, to relax, get ready, but it just isn't turning out that way. I think it's just as well we're going tonight, probably better." Yesterday we were all in a panic, with the conditions forecasted suddenly turning good and most of the crew having left for home, not everyone was able to make it for the start. Diana's missing one paddler for the shark-protective kayak; she still has three of the divers, not as many as were planned, and apparently one of the planned boats was chartered in the meantime by someone else and is gone. "All the oxygen tanks were on that boat," said Diana. "But we'll just go with what we've got and I'm OK with it.

"I've decided to be at peace with it no matter what happens. If there's weather, waves, a squall, I'm not going to think about my arms above the water. I'm going to say to myself don't worry about what is happening above water, just get your arms under it and push." — Diana

Blogged by Candace Lyle Hogan

Hemingway Marina, Havana, Cuba...just after 9 PM

POSTED BY XTREME DREAM TEAM ON AUG 8, 2011 IN BLOG | 19 COMMENTS



The Swim Begins

The Swim Begins

What a scene it was this balmy evening! Only a few hours passed after the vessels Mirage and Bellissimo arrived in Cuba to join The Voyager. Any plans for days spent in Cuba vanished as it became clear the Extreme Dream swim would indeed begin tonight. Hurry! Where's the ice? Somebody ordered pizza. Dr. Broder made sure he had his supplies. Diana was in great spirits as all the boats, shark divers, handlers, observers and media gathered for a meeting led by she and Bonnie...(see Candace's report!)

We moved to the departure shore area just after 7 pm. A small but enthusiastic crowd of Cuban and Americans gathered, some swimming in the water, some pulling up in 1950s era cars. People held up a large Cuban flag while chanting "USA! USA!"

Diana emerged from a small golf cart in her black bathing suit, spoke briefly to the gathered reporters and photographers, slowly put her blue swim cap on, hugged her chief handler Bonnie, adjusted her goggles, and hopped into the water as though she were entering her backyard pool. Official time was

7:45 pm and 10 seconds. The water was absolutely still, no wind, the kind of hot humid no-breeze weather you'd complain about in normal life.

I write this about an hour later. It's dark, overcast, with a hazy moon overhead. Diana is swimming

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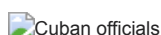
About this capture

And two kayaks, alongside Voyager's boom carrying LED lights that are guiding her. About half
k diver entered the water to take a look around. Diana has had her first feeding, and her
first hydration. Everyone is arranging sleep shifts, eating shifts, watch shifts. Each of the escort boats
lights shimmer along the horizon. The radios crackle as the boat crews chat. It is a gentle night...the
first long night of the Extreme Dream has begun.

—Elaine Lafferty

Hemingway Marina, Havana Cuba 4 pm Sunday

POSTED BY XTREME DREAM TEAM ON AUG 8, 2011 IN BLOG | 1 COMMENT



The boats and crew have arrived in sunny Cuba! And of course we are met at the dock by Diana
playing a bugle, to the laughs and cheers of Cuban customs officials. Some children are playing in the
water nearby giggling and splashing around.

It was a 15 hour crossing for both vessels Bellisimo and Mirage, the unique catamaran designed for
easy ocean access for divers and kayakers. A spectacular lightning storm and squall gave way to calm
seas, just the conditions Diana needs.

Right now Cuban officials are checking documents, and examining the boats, a process expected to
take a few hours. Next event: about 8 pm, when Diana is to walk into the water, and begin her 103 mile
swim to Florida.

What A Feat of Mind and Body

POSTED BY XTREME DREAM TEAM ON AUG 7, 2011 IN BLOG | 11 COMMENTS



On board Bellisimo heading to Cuba

I wonder how many understand what feats of mind and body Diana has been performing for two years now, out of sight of camera or spotlight, day in, day out—come to think of it, maybe the kind we all do in one way or another, just getting through some days and weeks, if you get my drift. In any case, she does hers in a state of sensory deprivation—in a tight swim cap with water slapping against her ears, the disorienting drift of the waves—she can't hear or see very well and with fatigue can come delirium. She's hallucinated birds dive-bombing her swim cap and been seasick during swims for hours on end, only to recover her strength and clarity again, time and time again. This is part of what the training is about, coming back from the undulating ups and downs. Months and months of strenuous interval training in a pool, monotonous, rhythmic hours in open water, so much of what goes into this sport of long distance swimming only a few people ever see. "Other sports seem so jolly and versatile compared with the grind of long distance swimming," Diana was quoted saying shortly before I met her. Sounds a lot like life. Maybe it takes a jolly and versatile person to put this metaphor on the map.

Candace

Blog 2, Aug 6

We are aboard the 75 foot Bellisimo...

POSTED BY XTREME DREAM TEAM ON AUG 6, 2011 IN BLOG | 9 COMMENTS



Elaine Lafferty is a former correspondent for Time magazine, and editor in chief of Ms. magazine. She has known Diana for nearly 20 years.

Key West – 7 pm

We are aboard the 75 foot Bellisimo, one of two boats carrying the expedition crew – among them physician Dr. Michael Broder, independent observers from the International Swimming Federation, and handlers experienced in feeding and hydrating Diana during the swim. We are preparing to depart Key West as dusk approaches. Diana and chief handler Bonnie arrived in Cuba today. The atmosphere is electric, anticipatory and even a bit frenzied as last minute equipment is loaded. Lists are being checked, and re-checked. Water, food, everything everyone will need for at least four nights at sea. The plan, right now, is for Diana to begin the swim from a beach near Havana late tomorrow afternoon, in the calmest of calm seas. Earlier today we had a fascinating discussion with Richard Theiss, one of the shark divers who will be ensuring both Diana's safety and the safety of the any curious sharks who wander near her. "We know for sure that no sharks will be hurt during this swim," he says. "That's a promise." He went on to describe the tactics used to discourage sharks from hanging around, a little like a retail store discouraging certain customers. "It's kind of like.. we don't take credit cards! Only cash! Go elsewhere!" he laughed. Like everyone on the team that Diana has assembled, Richard is a pro.

—Elaine

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About this capture

Xtreme Dream. For Diana Nyad's representation please contact Pam Derderian

