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The Night Before The Swim

Posted by Diana Nyad on Jul 10, 2010 in Blog | 0 comments



8:15pm Key West July 9, 2010 from Candace Lyle Hogan, one of Diana Nyad's swim handler for the 24-hour "training" swim tomorrow off the Florida Keys:

Walked Diana to her room, hoping she will get a good sleep before the 5:15 a.m. gathering time tomorrow. "I love this book I'm reading, but I'll finish it tonight," she said, adding regretfully, "what am I going to read after that...?"

Earlier, looking out over the calm Atlantic, Diana had said, "This is what I dream of for the Cuba swim." Along peaceful waters, with no wind, shortly before sunset, we arrived at Louie's Backyard for dinner, ten hours before she would be doing the longest training swim so far this year, 24 hours, as a prelude to a feat in planning for August that could take as many as 60 hours. On her first attempt to swim from Cuba to Florida, in August 1978, Diana swam 41 hours 49 minutes, still going strong after two full days and almost two full nights. I know, I was there and watched her, along with other crew members, handling the feedings mainly (swim handlers). Then, 30 years ago, we had to force her out of the water, convince her that weather and wave had thrown us so far off course it would now be impossible to

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Diana's Tweets



- Check out [@mikezubi](#), a wonderful and inspiring artist <http://t.co/SeyfYMCB> Is your Xtreme Dream to be a singer? [about 2 hours ago](#) from [HootSuite](#)
- A winner is made of effort, motivation, perseverance and the courage to always push ONWARD. <http://t.co/lxe2FjBh> [about 3 hours ago](#) from [HootSuite](#)
- Its an honor to be one of the featured figures in the [@secondact](#) awards <http://t.co/r3xfskNL> ~WINNING doesnt mean reaching the finish line~ [about 7 hours ago](#) from [HootSuite](#)
- [@blkberryswirl](#) Back at ya! Have fun, be safe and take in the New Year with a blast! 08:13:41 PM December 26, 2011 from [HootSuite](#) in reply to [BlkBerrySwirl](#)
- [@angelasmith_](#) Yes, I love the holidays. Hope you had a great Christmas.

reach the Florida shore. "Is there any shore I could swim to?" was her answer from the water, "I have at least 20 more hours in me, I know it, I can do it." We knew she could do it, too, she looked so strong, but we had to answer no, not even if you swim for a 100 more hours.

08:13:03 PM December 26, 2011 from
HootSuitein reply to AngelaSmith_

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That was three decades ago and there's no talk of that now, not any over the intervening years either. is a forward mover, always in the moment, living in the present, now looking ahead as far as

tomorrow morning though to what our hostess Maddie at the restaurant, wishing her luck, described as "so inspiring to us all, but such a distance, so many hours ahead of you, it must be daunting."

"It's challenging." Diana said, smiling.

"It has to be, though, doesn't it," says Maddie, "it has to be challenging to have an effect on all the rest of us. Too many times people get to be a certain age and think they can't do anything." Maddie used to be a personal trainer, she knows.

Diana's had a big day, a meeting with the boat crew this morning at the dock (Kings Pointe), so that Captain Rob could lay down the law to all us landlubbers Diana has invited along to be her connection with sustenance—food and fluids and encouragement that she's relying on some selected friends and her sister Liza to provide; six swim handlers in all, all age 50 and above, and two, along with me, Jon and Deborah who were on the swims through this same Gulf Stream what seems like an eon ago. Jon is 71. I am 62 now, and doing the one thing in my life I had been absolutely certain during all these in-between years that I would never have to do again in my life. Never have to see my best friend suffer, with seasickness for the first eight hours setting off in three to eight foot waves (only to recover incredibly), her mouth swollen with seawater but still resisting the mandate to stop. She lost 29 pounds during those 41 plus hours in 1978, but didn't even stay overnight in the hospital they took her to when we finally reached shore. She was fine, physically, the next day. But she was not so fine with the outcome. So she immediately planned the next try. Ultimately, the outcome was her original dream realized, one year later on or about her 30th birthday: swimming the farthest distance in history in open water, without a shark cage, 102 miles, something no woman—and no man either—ever accomplished before or has since. It was from Bimini to Florida.

Over dinner, I notice Diana's hand is trembling, but no need to mention it. I remember it, and far from a cause for alarm, it's recognizable as a sign that she's ready, as she has said she is, so so ready, so full of adrenalin that it has to find an outlet, through her fingers in this case. More than one during her several days here waiting for the crew to arrive, the swim to begin, has noticed the intensity, the readiness. A young man a couple days ago, also in line for checkout at a store, spoke to her: "You look ready for something," he said. "And it's going to be something very demanding, isn't it?" Yes, she said. He paused for a moment, then he opened his wallet and looked up at her. "I've been carrying this with me for twelve years. My grandmother gave it to me as she was dying, saying, 'Promise not to spend it and to only give it away to somebody who really needs the good luck of it.'" Then he pulled out something that was carefully folded, from his wallet. "Do you promise not to spend it?" he asked Diana.

"Yes," she said to the man, who's name is Augusto. "I promise."

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Diana Nyad's Xtreme Dream

"Diana is more than a swimmer. She's a beacon of hope to us all that we can dream big, live life large, and look back at all of it with no regrets whatsoever."

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