

## NOVEMBER SMOKE SIGNALS

### THANKS FOR GIVING

FGAC has been registered as part of the Feed The Need Challenge (*see attached flier*) to help serve those in need in the DC area with food and warm coats. We're helping out by donating gently used coats or non-perishable food items (or \$10 grocery store gift cards) to those in need. Here's what to do:

Bring in your donation to practice Thursday or Friday to any of the following swimmer families: Jaffe, Latona, Plihal, or Shinn-Miller (or to a coach as an emergency backup) If it is more convenient you can also drop off your donation between 1:30-3:00 pm this Saturday, November 14th, at 6100 Georgia Avenue NW. Be sure to tell them you're with FGAC! There will also be food, live music and good spirits at the event, with coats being distributed as of 3:30 pm.

Any middle or high school swimmers who are interested in helping out as runners or truck loaders at the event itself, please contact Christie Latona at [latona@me.com](mailto:latona@me.com) so that enough community service forms are on hand. Volunteers for sorting and coat distribution would also be of great help.

Due to the short notice please spread the word fast! Thank you Christie for allowing us the opportunity to help and to everyone who contributes.

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### ALSO IN THIS ISSUE:

- Holiday Greenery Sale
- Apparel Updates
- Age Group Program Review
- Even More Meet Entry Guidelines
- Team Directory Highlights
- Practice Schedule Cancellations and Changes
- Winter Break Practice Schedule
- Upcoming Meets including Sport Fair 9 & up Team Championship
- News & Notes

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### HOLIDAY GREENERY SALE!

Our annual Greenery sale is now underway. *Flier located on the web site.*

This is a simple, timely and low maintenance fundraiser, helping offset the cost of national team travel, training equipment and team social activities. Thank you to the core group of parents who continue to make this event possible.

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## **APPAREL UPDATE**

With cap quality problems and a supplemental order for t-shirts necessary, our team issue apparel continues to be a thorny process this year. Now we've discovered that our suit order from Blazin is MIA. Apparently the printer, having completed printing the logo on the suits, mistakenly sent the order back to LOYOLA! Blaise is working to get this resolved ASAP, hoping to do so by the meet this weekend. We appreciate your patience and will keep you posted.

As for the caps and t-shirts... We are submitting photographs of damaged caps to the manufacturer and negotiating for replacements. We are also taking names and sizes at practice of those kids who have not yet received a t-shirt. The kids have been wonderfully understanding under the circumstances. This supplemental t-shirt order will be placed early next week.

Let's hope the sale apparel goes more smoothly!

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## **AGE GROUP PROGRAM REVIEW**

While the team roster is a little bloated at the Senior level, the numbers at the Age Group level (L1-L3) have balanced out nicely. With new wrinkles in the schedule helping to improve lane space, we're well positioned for solid and lasting development. One area we have targeted going forward is better participation at Takoma on Friday.

We're also glad to see attendance for Level 2 on the rise recently. We figured early on that several factors might be contributing to the slow start, most notably the move to Takoma on Friday, participation in fall sports and the need for schedules and carpools to settle in. Still, a string of practices below 50% attendance had our attention. As of the last two weeks however, that trend has been reversed and we've made good progress.

Another piece of the puzzle is to have fairly consistent meet attendance going forward. Meet attendance at the age group level is not critical to development, but it helps. Kids should be exposed periodically to competition because it's the only way to get true racing experience. The goal isn't so much "best times" as it is getting acquainted and comfortable with the entire process. It's also one of the purest measures of development, which may or may not have anything to do

with times. Frequency of meets should be determined according to each swimmer's desire and response along the way.

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## **EVEN MORE MEET ENTRY GUIDELINES**

Miss a meet entry? Still bedeviled by the necessary steps to make meet entry hassle free? Staring down the barrel of a \$10.00 per event deck entry fee? Here are a few key points to help ease the pain:

- Meet entry due dates are announced at practices, issued in newsletters and bulletins, located on the Meet Schedule page of our website and often made as announcements on our website homepage as they are coming due.
- Another foolproof rule of thumb is that entries are due to us 48 hrs in advance of the date and time they are due to the meet director, as listed in the meet announcement. (Remember, once you identify a meet on our schedule, go to [pvswim.org](http://pvswim.org) to find the meet announcement)
- Stay abreast of those meets which apply to YOUR swimmer. Meets come in all shapes and sizes. Our short course season competition schedule is essentially divided into two halves: September-December and January-March, with each half culminating in at least one championship meet. This may be a good way for you to forecast and plan.
- It's fine to opt out of meets as part of your plan. We do encourage the kids to race and hope they are willing to swim at least those those meets we identify as team or individual championships, but we'll yield to whatever the swimmer and family feel is best.
- Most of all, we don't want those who want to race to miss their opportunities.

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## **TEAM DIRECTORY**

Our caps go off to the Wagner family for continuing to make available the FGAC Team Directory. This comprehensive and well organized catalog, conceived of and designed by them, has been an institutional contribution of the highest order. We are eternally grateful as they move on to the ranks of alumni with the graduation of their daughter Cara this year and thankful to the Chavez family for agreeing to take it over!

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## PRACTICE SCHEDULE

11/22 L1-L3 No practice due to swim meet at Fairland  
11/22 L4-L5 Practice at Takoma 11:00am -1:30pm  
11/26 ALL LEVELS No practice due to Thanksgiving  
11/27 Practice for returning college students 8-10am  
11/27 L1-L3 Regular pm practice at Takoma  
11/29 L1-L3 Regular am practice at Fairland; L4-L5 No practice  
12/6 ALL LEVELS\* No practice due to swim meet at Fairland  
12/10-12/13 ALL LEVELS No practice due to Sport Fair Winter Classic

\*L2-L3 Afternoon Laser Tag - details to follow

\*L4-L5 Afternoon hike at Sugarloaf Mountain - details to follow

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## WINTER BREAK PRACTICE SCHEDULE

### Level 1

12/14/09 - 1/2/10 OFF for winter break

1/3/09 Return to regular practice times

### Age Group Levels 2-3

12/14-12/26 OFF for winter break

12/27-12/31 Winter break training - special hrs TBA

1/1/10 OFF for New Year's Day

1/3 Return to regular practice times

### Senior Level 4-5 only

12/14-12/15 OFF following Sport Fair

12/16-12/23 Return to regular practice times

12/24-12/26 OFF for winter break

12/27-12/31 Winter break training - special am/pm hrs TBA

1/1/10 OFF for New Year's Day

1/3 Return to regular practice times

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## MEET SCHEDULE

11/14-15 RMSC Invite @ MLK (9 & up) *Entries closed.*

11/22 Pilgrim Pentathlon @ Claude Moore (9 & under) *Entries closed.*

**Claude Moore Recreation Center is a hike. It's in Sterling VA and can be tricky to locate. Give yourself ample travel time.**

11/27-29 DE State Meet @ U of D, Newark DE (13 & up L4-5) *Entries closed.*  
**Code of Conduct Agreements are now available on the website. If you haven't already done so, please report your rooming arrangements to Dan or Dave.**

12/10-14 Sport Fair Winter Classic @ GMU, Fairfax VA (9 & up) *Entry deadline Sunday 11/22/09.*

**COACHES WILL DRAFT AN ENTRY FOR ALL SWIMMERS 9 & UP TO BE EMAILED NEXT WEEK FOR REVIEW. THOSE SWIMMERS IN LEVELS 2-4 WHO CHOOSE NOT TO GO MUST NOTIFY US AS OF THE DEADLINE**

**ABOVE.** Because this is a team championship, we hope for 100% participation and appreciate all you can do to allow your swimmer to take off from school on Friday to compete. One of the rare and good things about this meet is that it also offers relay competition. We would like to put forth our best and deepest combination of swimmers.

1/23-24/10 January Open @ Fairland (9 & up) *Entries due TBD*

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## **NEWS & NOTES**

1. We need a couple of parent volunteers to host a mini party for the 8 & unders, to be held in one of the meeting rooms at Fairland prior to Wednesday, 12/9. A simple affair of food and beverage following a practice is how we've done it in the past. Once someone agrees to take it on, we can set a date and reserve a room. Anyone interested please contact Dan. If you want anymore insight before volunteering, contact Dan or Carol Toth.
2. The coaching staff is as strong as ever, with assistants Ryan Hardy and Robb Smith back in action and senior level intern Adrienne Bush in her second year of work. We'll also have the guest assistance of Allison Stevens during holidays-- whenever she's able to come home from graduate school at Northwestern!
3. Remember to keep tabs on the Announcements and Documents sections of the website.
4. Fairland's ( and therefore our) inclement weather policy follows Montgomery County School District. The pool typically closes when schools are closed. Early dismissal from school may or may not result in the pool closing. You can call Fairland at 301-362-6060 to confirm facility status. If they are open, then we have practice. You can also expect inclement weather announcements from us to be emailed, texted and posted to the website by 2:00 pm on bad weather days. For early am practices, we typically make a decision the night before.
5. Thank you for helping to limit waste by providing your kids with reusable water bottles! Hydration is critical to athletic performance and we advocate it

endlessly. But we don't want that to mean increased consumption of disposable plastic bottles.