

Two turn out for swim meet

BY JOHN STOKES
Democrat Staff Writer

Don Fletcher and Chuck Letzig of Little Rock recently competed in a national 10,000-meter relay swim meet at the Bess Chisum Stephens YWCA pool.

None of their challengers were present. Still, Fletcher and Letzig placed third in the 30-34 age bracket with a time of 2:19.33 on Sept. 13.

Where was the competition?

All over the country swimming the 10,000 meters in different pools, at different times, even in different months.

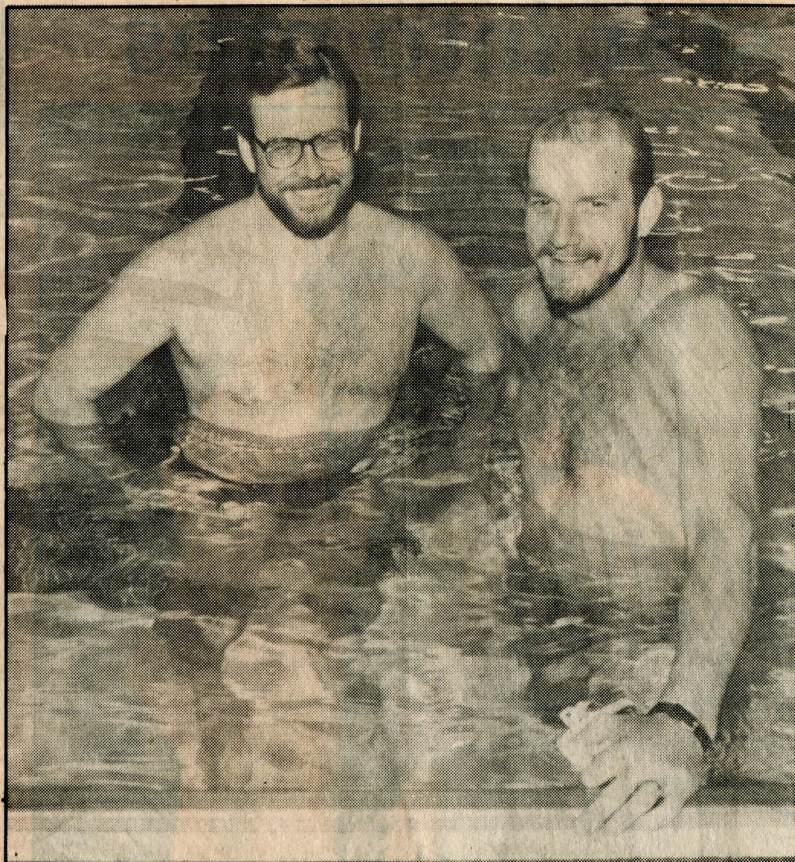
The meet, hosted by the Virginia Masters swim club, was a type known as a "postal meet," where competitors, with a monitor to verify their times and distance, swim at their local pools and mail the results to the host club.

The host then compares the results and mails back awards.

The only rules were that each partner had to swim 5,000 meters, and the competitors couldn't be swimming at the same time. Other than that, they could break the legs up any way they wanted to.

Fletcher and Letzig each swam 15 200-meter legs, 15 100s and 10 50s.

So how did they get interested in doing the swim?



Arkansas Democrat/Nyma Benner

AT HOME IN WATER — Little Rock's Chuck Letzig (left) and Don Fletcher recently placed third in the 30-34 age bracket in a 10,000-meter national "postal swim" sponsored by the Virginia Masters Swimming Club.

Letzig is president of the masters swim club and got an entry form for the meet in the

mail. "No one else wanted to do it except Don and I," he said.

So they got fellow swimmer Ron Bank to verify their performance and went to the pool.

Not having any other competitors to pace themselves against didn't present that much of a problem, they said.

"Don and I are both used to swimming against the clock," Letzig said.

But communicating with each other did pose a problem.

'Don and I are both used to swimming against the clock.'

Because one of them was always in the water swimming, they couldn't talk to each other except by passing messages through Bank.

"He (Bank) timed and counted and consoled," said Letzig.

He also provided motivation.

"I went out too fast," Fletcher said, "and by the time I got through the 200s I wanted to quit ... but Ron wouldn't let me."

Letzig hit his own walls.

"There were times when I wanted to stop or slow down," he said, "but I said to myself, 'no, I've got too much invested in this.'"