

## Golden Memories

# Reader turns fear of deep water into joy of swimming, diving

**By Bob Grow**  
*Special to The Mercury*

My father took me to a number of area pools at the age of 7 or so. As soon as the water got over my head, I panicked. Dad wasted no time in getting me to the **YMCA** on King Street, where I started taking gym classes and swimming twice a week.

All the other kids seemed to know how to swim — here I was, couldn't even float. So I knuckled down and within two to three weeks, I earned my swimming certificate.

That opened all kinds of doors for me. Soon I was on the YMCA swim team, coached by Joe Ross, the mailman, for most of my teen years. The two events I competed in were the 40-yard freestyle

and the medley relay. Our medley relay team was the best in the districts for two years.

Kenny Wensel did the backstroke, Donald Keifreider, the breaststroke, I swam freestyle. They were the members of the medley team. Others on the swim team were Mike Griesemer, Jimmy Boyer, Jim Chaplin, Brennen Kelly, and other boys whose names escape me.

The joys of swimming and diving all began with me screaming for dear life when the water got too deep!

*Each week, The Mercury prints letters or guest columns about Pottstown's past and the memories of area readers. Contributors whose work is selected for publication receive \$25. Share your recollections by writing to Nostalgia, in care of The Mercury, Hanover and King streets, Pottstown, PA 19464.*

