

by Sid Hollister

## TRINKETO ERGO SUM I TRINKET, THEREFORE I AM

**Editors' Note:** *Despite the poor timing of this article (see Recycled Trinkets on page 3), we couldn't resist publishing another whimsical piece of writing by Sid Hollister on this most-important subject matter.*

To many of us, the high point of a Dolphin swim is trinket time on the deck. Nothing can compare to the unique blend of delight and puzzlement that, like August fog, sweeps over the face of the first trinket recipient. 'It's nice,' the expression says, 'but what is it?'

Not every Dolphin has a strong attachment to these trinket experiences. The more competitive among us prefer the limb-thrashing start of a swim or the final sprint to the beach, while the heavy eaters favor the potlucks that round off many events. Well, *gusti sono gusti, chacun a son goût, trinketo ergo sum*, and no problem.

The fact is that many of us remember certain 'trinket moments' as significant milestones in our Dolphin lives. However, most of us remain completely ignorant of the months of rigorous training our trinket selectors undergo before assuming their heavy responsibilities. Most of us couldn't tell you a thing about the secret headquarters for that training—the Trinket Academy of Curios and Kitsch, Inc., known to trinketeers everywhere as TACKI.

Weekend after weekend our trinket selectors are driven—sometimes barefooted along wooded paths, flicked now and again by willow switches—to trinket colloquia in the Xanadus of Contra Costa County. There, the hardy trainees attend seminars on such topics as the history of trinkets, the spiritual aspects of trinketry, and how to deal with trinket refusniks. The seminars are often held in rooms smaller and hotter—at least

so we've been told—than the women's sauna. For hours, our dedicated seminarians pore over trinket and gift catalogues that rival in heft J. Edgar Hoover's file on that well-known pinko, Marcel Proust, and are often as hard to decipher as the true significance of the perfidious madeleine that sent him in search of his past (Madeleine, schmadeleine. We all know that Proust really dipped a chocolate glazed French donut). TACKI students also spend hours perfecting the arcane skill of figuring out



*Swim Commissioner Pete Bianucci with a very expensive toilet seat cover*

what's actually pictured in the tiny images that fill page after page of those imposing catalogues.

All of this, done in top secrecy of course, leads to intense competition among trinket selectors, who come to these seminars from all over California. We are proud to report that Dolphin Club selectors, for years now, have handily whipped their peers in the Double-Latte-No-Foam Makers of Novato, the California Surrealty

Association, and Parking Control Officers Anonymous.

Without the keen edge such competition produces, our selectors could not have given us such memorable trinkets as the combination nose-hair clipper and weed-whacker. The users we sniffed out report that it fulfills both functions beautifully, although its size has made carrying it on a key chain an embarrassment for some male Dolphins.

The combo post-hole digger and navel-lint remover is also remembered with penetrating clarity by those who survived its use. And who could ever forget the combination neoprene hat and whoopie cushion, an ingenious trinket vividly remembered by swimmers who, while wearing it, bumped into another swimmer, inflating the cushion with a sound that instantly drew a throng of randy sea lions.

Our favorite trinket though, awarded to those who participated in the Sacramento to San Francisco Swim, was the cowed Dolphin Pullover—all soft cotton fleece on the outside; all stimulating boar bristles on the inside. This trinket became keenly coveted by Dolphin athletes training to do the Endless Dipsea. To that small, but hardy band, reachable only by cell phones during their prolonged training, the trinket selectors extend their regrets that there weren't enough shirts to go around. All of us wish them happy trails, confident that they (or their heirs) will receive for their efforts something appropriate to their accomplishment. What comes immediately to mind is a January weekend at that famous spa in Salem, Massachusetts, The Rack and Pillory.

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