

SWIM FOR LIFE

Jonathan Scott finds a place beyond love

By Jay Critchley

Late last summer he was able to slowly walk across Herring Cove Beach and fall into the water to swim a few yards. A year of intestinal cancer treatments, including 10 months in bed, had left Jonathan Scott feeling like an alien. But he instinctually came home to the water. Swimming had always been his comfort zone.

At 60, living with AIDS for 30 years, Jonathan mourned the loss of many friends who missed the last three decades of their lives to the pandemic. They had formed a unique

family that organized the annual Esther Williams Water Ballet and Bathing Suit Competition. This historic and decidedly queer event was held on the Fourth of July at Herring Cove Beach during the 1980s, and Jonathan reigned as a resplendent Esther herself, tiara and all.

He soon shifted his energy to his work as executive director of the Victory Programs in Boston, and to the Swim for Life. In Boston, he created 20 programs that treat addiction and homelessness, including the Boston Living Center, the first of its kind in the country to treat HIV and addiction.

He says that Provincetown is a model community for the world, and the Swim for Life shows us the power of community.

“There is no other event like the Swim for Life,” he says, “it’s magic and brings together all the things I love, the full circle of life. It’s an amazing bridge between generations, those that never went through the plague.”

Jonathan is now back on track to swim on Sept. 9 for the 14th time. Provincetown is now his permanent home, and he is grateful to his longtime husband, Michael McGill, and their 14-year-old son, Luis, for their loving support. He makes a daily trip to Herring Cove Beach for his 7 a.m. swim, and then collects stones in remembrance of all his lost friends. On the morning of the Swim he visits Pilgrim Park and ritualistically places the stones on the name markers of loved



Jonathan Scott will make his 14th splash for the Swim for Life this September. [PHOTO JAY CRITCHLEY]

ones, including his lover, Kevin Hynes, who died 24 years ago.

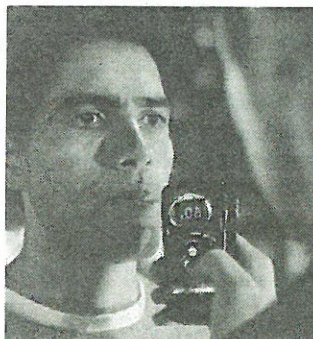
Jonathan’s journey has brought him to an understanding of what it means to be human, to a place beyond love. To the existential question, what does it mean to be human? “Awe” is his response. The wonder

and mystery of life, of Provincetown, of the Swim, of his family.

Join Jonathan on Sept. 9 at the Swim for Life & Paddler Flotilla. Swimmers, kayakers, boaters and volunteers are welcome. Visit swim4life.org for more information. Take the plunge!

Dinner out benefits seniors

WELLFLEET — Between Labor Day and Columbus Day, food lovers can dine out at a restaurant in town and double their fun by giving to a good cause. Participating restaurants have chosen an evening when they will donate a percentage of their food sales to the Friends of the Wellfleet Council on Aging. The donation will support the senior center programs, services and other special needs of Wellfleet’s seniors. Scheduled days of participating restaurants are: The Bookstore, Friday, Sept. 8; Moby Dick’s, Tuesday, Sept. 12; The Pearl, Friday, Sept. 15; Catch of the Day, Monday, Sept. 18; PJ’s Family Restaurant, Saturday, Sept. 23; The Wicked Oyster, Sunday, Sept. 24; Van Rensselaer’s, Monday, Sept. 25; Marconi Beach Restaurant, Sunday, Oct. 1; Winslow’s Tavern, Thursday, Oct. 5; and PB Boulangerie, Thursday, Oct. 12.




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