

# Shields tends to 'unfinished business'

**LISA TALLYN**  
Staff Writer

Marathon swimmer Colleen Shields completed some unfinished business Sunday morning when she ended her successful crossing of Lake Ontario at Marilyn Bell Park.

At 6 p.m. Saturday the 54-year-old Georgetown woman slipped into the water at Niagara-on-the-Lake. About 16 and a half hours later she finished the 32-mile crossing, earning the distinction of being the oldest person to swim Lake Ontario.

"Yes I am the old lady of the lake again," said an elated, but still stiff Shields Monday morning. She said back in 1990 she was the oldest woman (at age 38) to swim across the lake, and was happy to revive that title again this weekend. She even managed to shave nearly an hour-and-a-half off her previous time.

Since that initial crossing Shields felt she had "unfinished business" because due to severe weather she wasn't able to end her swim at Marilyn Bell Park and instead had to finish at Toronto's Leslie St. Spit.

"The real swim is from Niagara-on-the-Lake to Marilyn Bell Park (where in 1954 the 16-year-old swimmer who was the first to cross the lake finished)," said Shields, who re-read Bell's book Friday as inspiration for her swim. "I have achieved what I wanted to achieve better than I ever thought I could."

Shields and her friend Nicole Mallette of Hamilton, both members of the Etobicoke Masters Aquatic Club, attempted to be the first tandem team to cross the lake last summer but had to abandon their dual attempt after Mallette suffered a severe muscle spasm. Shields continued on, but due to severe winds

and five-foot waves had to give up just five miles from shore.

Last year's swim garnered media attention and Shields wanted to make this one more low-key and didn't want any advance publicity.

She was originally planning on swimming Friday night, but due to strong north winds and three to four foot waves she was forced to delay the swim until the next night.

She said the water was "like glass" until about 11 p.m. Saturday, and then it became quite choppy throughout the night.

"I wanted out in the middle of the night because I was sick and it was rough. But I just took my food and went on with it."

She said she got lucky with the lake temperature because it never went below 68 F.

With sun-up came calmer waters and she said it "felt great" when Marilyn Bell Park came into sight.

"I turned around to one of my friends (accompanying her in a boat) about a mile out and said, "Wow is this really happening?"

Friends and several dragon boat teams in the area were screaming and cheering as she came ashore.

With her business done, Shields says she is also done with marathon swimming, but through her role with Solo Swims of Ontario she said she will be there to help any other marathon swimmers with their crossings.

Shields' swim was a fund-raiser for children's charity Right to Play. At press-time she had raised approximately \$3,000, and was hoping more donations would come in.

(Lisa Tallyn can be reached at [ltallyn@independentfreepress.com](mailto:ltallyn@independentfreepress.com))



**COLLEEN SHIELDS**

**FEET IN MOTION**  
Your Active Footwear & Apparel Store

A perfect fit  
whether you know  
how to tie them  
... or not!

extra wide wide medium

**HOURS:**  
M-W 10-6 • T-F 10-8  
Sat 10-5 • Sun. closed

**905-877-3201** 49 Main St., Georgetown

## FACTORY AUTHORIZED CLEARANCE OF LAST YEAR'S MODELS!



Cabinet & structures that will last a lifetime.

Your Sunrise Spa dealer for 15 yrs.

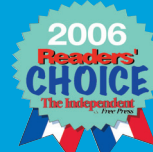
Financing available O.A.C.

Free Local Delivery



**Emerald ISLE**

HOME DECOR



265 GUELPH ST., GEORGETOWN 905-873-2753

400 MAIN ST. E., MILTON 905-693-9948