

# Boston Sunday Globe

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## Loved that murky water

### A DIP IN THE CHARLES

Dozens get kick  
out of Charles race

By Claire Cummings  
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Dozens of men in Speedos and women in one-piece bathing suits lined up yesterday morning on the lock for the race. The toned — and the not-so-toned — swimmers lapped in place to warm their muscles while peering into the greenish-brown waters.

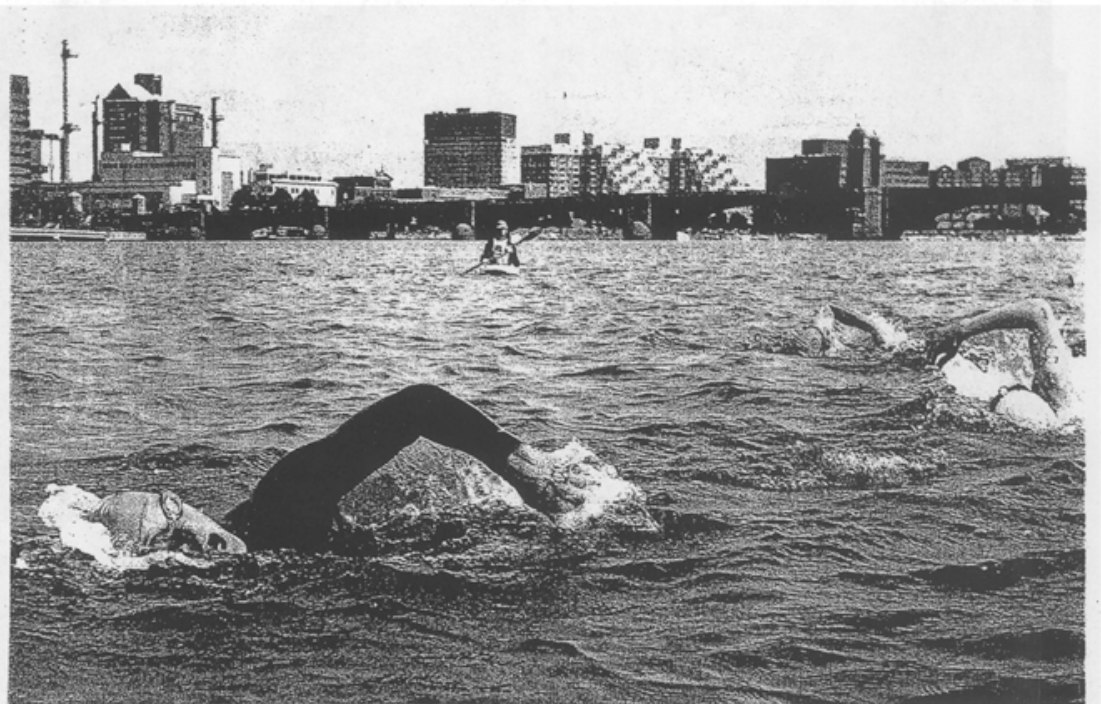
But this was no ordinary swim, nor ordinary water. They were about to plunge into the Charles river — Boston's historically dingy waterway that has not seen swimmers in more than half a century. The water temperature hovered in the mid-70s and it was, as always, murky, but that did not stop 69 people from braving that infamous dirty water.

To some, the morning jaunt was just another athletic feat. But for many Bostonians, the one-mile loop signified hope for a swimmable Charles — once a forbidden and unthinkable summer activity.

Amy Walsh's father was born and raised in Cambridge and swam there in the 1950s. He loved it, and did not know any better, he said.

"You just never know what it's going to be like — the winds, the currents. Is everyone going to be on top of each other?" said Walsh, 41, of Belmont, before yesterday's swim. "I realize that they wouldn't allow this to happen if it weren't safe to swim."

Just last week, reports of algae growth threatened the event, which was canceled last year when the same toxic substance



WENDY MAEDA/GLOBE STAFF

With clearance from state health and environmental officials for the 1-mile race, swimmers neared the finish yesterday during the first organized swimming event to be held in the once heavily polluted river in more than 50 years. **B7.**

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