

Grove City Retiree Begins His 100-Mile Ocean Swim

KEY WEST, Fla. (UPI) — Shouting, "Let's go; let's go," Walter Poenish, 62, of 2210 Gantz Rd., Grove City, Ohio, dove into the choppy Gulf Stream about 20 miles south-southeast of Key West Saturday, slipped inside his shark protection cage and began his 100-mile "Bicentennial Swim" to Miami Beach.

The red, white and blue shark cage — adorned with several American flags, an Ohio flag, and as if to tempt fate, a photo of a great white shark — is being towed by the 35-foot Bertram yacht, "Tranquiler."

POENISH HOPES to step out onto

The Way It Was —



In 1776

Two hundred years ago today, the Virginia Convention elected five delegates to the Continental Congress for one year. Thomas Jefferson was re-elected.

Miami Beach Monday morning after the non-stop swim.

The lightweight 24-foot by 14-foot cage, made only of chicken wire stretched over conduit pipe, was taking quite a beating on deck during the trip from Key West to the Gulf Stream, and Poenish decided to start his trip early rather than risk further damage to the cage.

"I'm going to make the 100 miles," he said. "I've always had a fascination about seeing how far I could go before my arms were ready to drop off."

EACH OF HIS three other swims have been halted prematurely because of mechanical problems with the cage or because of a shark frenzy, during which the fish will attack anything.

When asked if he would continue his trip even if his cage fell apart, he replied, "Hell no, there's sharks out there."

Poenish's 90 $\frac{1}{4}$ -mile swim in 1972 — listed in the Guinness Book of World Records — halted abruptly when a large, round-nosed shark knocked him

and his cage completely out of the water.

DURING THE swim, which could last more than 21 hours, Poenish will exist on a special concoction he calls "tiger juice" cooked up by his 29-year-old wife Faye consisting of "bootstrap molasses, honey, dextrose, glucose, and a few other secret ingredients."

Poenish, a former baker who lives on Social Security, says this will be his last long-distance swim.

"My wife says she's getting too old to put up with this," he says and laughs wildly. "Can you beat it — she's getting too old."

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