

FOREWORD

Most people who write about the Ironman and the sport of triathlon tend to be submerged in the lifestyle. They get up close and personal to a chlorinated pool five days a week and can't get through a typical day without spending a few hours on their bike, running the roads around their neighborhood and then emailing and Facebooking everyone they have ever met with the mind-numbing details of their mind-numbing workouts.

These people look at a few hours of spare time in their everyday life as the perfect opportunity to squeeze in a swim, bike, run, weight workout, yoga class or stretching session. Lee Gruenfeld, by contrast, would much rather use any spare time he might have to do something actually worthwhile, like catching a *matinée*, squeezing in a power nap, doing the *New York Times* crossword puzzle with a latte close by, or, if we're talking a larger window of time because his multiple-time Ironman age group champion wife Cherie happens to be out on a long bike ride, the perfect opportunity to hit the links and work on his long irons. In a cart, of course. In Lee's mind, any activity involving sweat is the devil.

Since Cherie is one of the greatest age group triathletes to ever grace this planet, and he is exposed to all things endurance 24 hours a day, seven days a week, Lee, like that Zen-enhanced dog walker who is somehow always able to avoid becoming one with the Hummer-sized St. Bernard droppings that are constantly in his life, has been able to steer clear of stepping into any of the endurance insanity that he is constantly exposed to.

Instead, he has become the ultimate outsider who prides himself on being able to document the craziness that surrounds him. He somehow, somehow, has been able to survive in the eye of the hurricane with his 54" flat screen, remote control, Bear Claw and frosty mug always at the ready.

For the age group athlete and the professional, triathlon is serious business. Their training, racing and excessive behavior is how they identify themselves and how they connect with their training partners. To Lee Gruenfeld, one of the most accomplished humorists and authors around, these athletes and their quest to go farther and faster than ever before provide not only inspiration, but constant entertainment.

This collection of Lee's Ironman-related stories is guaranteed to give you insight into what makes the Ironman athlete remarkable.

When it comes to being an endurance athlete, Lee will tell you that he has no interest, and, even if he did, he would be totally hopeless. But as your trusted observer of the people in the sport of triathlon, he is not only incredibly insightful but also funny as hell.

Enjoy this book!

Bob Babbitt
Co-Founder Competitor Magazine
Co-Founder Challenged Athletes Foundation
10th Inductee Ironman Triathlon Hall of Fame
2012 Inductee USA Triathlon Hall of Fame