

# National

## Movie star reminisces about bygone days of swim competition

United Press International  
LOS ANGELES — Sitting next to Buster Crabbe brings on an uneasy feeling.

You keep looking warily around for the alligators and lions. Or waiting to get zapped by Ming the Merciless, the evil emperor of the universe. Or anticipating the rush of Killer Kane and his battalions of robots.

For Crabbe, those were everyday occurrences. And it's hard to imagine he isn't fighting the fantasy foes anymore.

But Buster Crabbe — who as Flash Gordon fought Ming the Merciless, as Buck Rogers battled Killer Kane and as Tarzan warded off daily attacks by wild creatures — is now 72 years old.

And those television shows and movies of the 1930s and '40s are long gone.

But don't get the idea Crabbe is some ancient relic, some worn-out actor on the doorstep of the Great Stage in the Sky.

Despite his age, he's still a tank dynamo, with rippling chest muscles and powerful arms and legs. He swims two or more miles a day

and looks like he could still knock the lights out of the creatures of the universe and the jungles.

And he makes it clear that when he reminisces he'd rather talk less about acting and more about the event that allowed him to become an actor — the gold medal he won in the 400-meter freestyle event in the 1932 Olympics in Los Angeles in a swim stadium next to the Coliseum.

Crabbe, along with 1972 Olympic swim champion Mark Spitz, recently dropped by the stadium for the McDonald's Olympic Youth Swim Meet. Sitting beside the pool brought forth a flood of stories.

"See that gate over there?" Crabbe said. "When I was a student at Southern Cal, I used to climb that fence every day at six in the morning and put in a few hours of training in the pool.

"They had barbed wire at the top and that made it pretty tough. But now they've got that damn sheet of metal and it's impossible to get over."

Crabbe recalled the finals of the 400-meter freestyle. He pointed out the lane he was in and the

lanes his chief rivals were in, and a wide grin creased his face.

"I had a close call for the gold medal," he said. "The Frenchman almost beat me. I watched him in trials and he always slowed down near the end and got beat by one or two guys.

"I figured he wasn't in shape. But I found out that was all part of his act. He just wanted everyone to think he didn't have anything left.

"In the last 50 meters, we were dead even. As I hit the wall, I looked over and saw his head bob in his final stroke and I knew I'd whipped him. Got him by one-tenth of a second."

Crabbe said the biggest thrill of his life came a minute later.

"I looked up and saw my father jumping over the fence," Crabbe said. "He fought his way through the police and ran over and hugged me.

"He just wouldn't let go of me. It was the most excited he'd ever been in his life.

"It still gives me goosebumps to think of it. It's a marvelous memory."

## Beatle's car to be sold at auction

United Press International  
AUBURN, Ind. — Ron Morgan is expecting to get \$250,000 for a 1956 Bentley that is blue,

green and yellow on the outside, pink and purple on the inside and once belonged to former Beatle John Lennon.

Morgan will put the car on the auction block Sunday at the Auburn-Cord-Duesenberg festival and classic car auction.

Morgan, 44, a wholesale auto dealer from Santa Ana, Calif., said he hopes to get at least \$250,000 for the psychedelic Bentley.

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