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[www.swimaqua.org](http://www.swimaqua.org)  
Hotline 281-488-1582

Bay Area AQUASTARS  
Houston, TX 77062

Turning today's potential into tomorrow's performance

**Bay Area  
Aquastars**

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Treasurer  
Marcy Barr

Secretary  
Scott Cragin

Directors  
Ellen Baker  
Patty Hermann  
Patty McElhany  
Rick Jones

Meet Entries  
Kelli Baliker

Head Coach  
Harold Johnston

**NEXT  
BOARD  
MEETING**

Tuesday,  
Feb. 8

8:30 pm

Gloria Dei  
Church,  
Nassau Bay

**ALL PARENTS  
INVITED AND  
ENCOURAGED  
TO ATTEND!**

**Meets are for EVERYONE!**  
*An Important Part of Development  
for Swimmers at All Levels*

AQUASTAR has almost 300 registered swimmers, but fewer than 10% of them attend meets regularly. Teams our size generally have more than 50 swimmers attending open meets, which is our goal!

Although attending meets is not required to be a member of AQUASTAR, we are a competitive swim team. Therefore we want all swimmers to participate whenever possible to gain the many benefits of attending meets.

**Meets are Fun and Challenging**

Most swimmers find they really enjoy the thrill of improving their swim times from one meet to the next, the fun of socializing with their teammates between races and the enthusiastic support they receive from their teammates during competitions.

**Meets Speed Improvement/ Promotion**

Second, AQUA coaches have found that swimmers who regularly attend meets improve more rapidly and get more out of swimming than those swimmers who only attend practices. Coaches use meet performance to evaluate progress and establish plans for individual improvement as well as determining progression within the team training groups.

*Forty swimmers are currently entered in the "Klein Aquatics Open" Jan 28-30. Swimmers can still enter "on-deck," at the pool on the days of the meet. For more information, see the meet invitation or contact or Kelli Baliker at [kbaliker@houston.rr.com](mailto:kbaliker@houston.rr.com).*

**Meets are Motivational and Rewarding**

Swimmers who attend meets are recognized for their achievements on the AQUA website, in the AQUA newsletter, as well as in local and national news outlets. The meet results are proof that all their hard work at practice has results.

**Meets Comprise 10% of the Grade for Swimmers with P.E. Waivers**

Ten percent of a student's grade each grading period is based on attendance at one meet. If a student does not attend at least one meet, he or she would need to have perfect attendance at practice to receive an "A."

**Meets Let Others Know about AQUASTAR**

Finally, teams become best known by what happens at meets. We are known for throngs of teammates cheering on swimmers in the water, always stepping up with volunteers, and swimming really fast when we compete as a team. Kids have a great time at meets and do well when they have the support of friends and teammates.

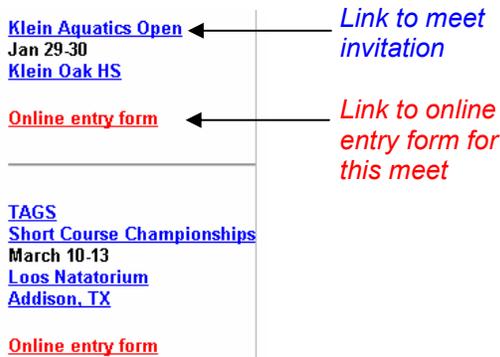
Although many meets are listed on the AQUASTAR website, an individual swimmer's age and ability determine which meet they can attend. An individual swimmer may only qualify for a meet once a month; which is less of a time commitment than most other sports with games several times a week.

For information on entering and paying for meets, see page 2 of this newsletter. For additional information, ask the "parent on deck" at your practice pool or contact or Kelli Baliker at [kbaliker@houston.rr.com](mailto:kbaliker@houston.rr.com).

## Online Meet Entry Form Makes Meet Entry Simple as 1-2-3

To make it easy to complete your meet entries, AQUA utilizes an on-line meet entry form. The online entry form is available for each meet as soon as meet entry information is posted on the Gulf website.

Upcoming meets are listed on the left side of the AQUASTAR homepage. Each listing includes links to the meet invitation as well as the online entry form for that meet. We also have hard copies of meet invitations at practice pools. The meet invitation includes a schedule of events, meet format and number of events a swimmer can enter each day.



1. To enter a meet, click the link to the online form for that meet.
2. Complete all information and follow all instructions on the form, including calculating your total entry fees, indicating when and how you will volunteer at the meet and clicking the radial button on the bottom next to your desired payment option.

The form cannot be submitted without completing all key information, such as name, age, USA ID#, total entry fees owed, etc.

Please note that the entry fee computed at the bottom of the form includes a \$0.25 per event more than the fee listed in the Meet Invitation. We use this fee to cover team costs related to the meet such as for coaches or relay entry fees.

3. Click the "Submit" button on the bottom of the form. For confirmation of your entry, print a copy of the confirmation form that appears once you've submitted your entry. Though you can still pay by check, when used with the prepaid meet entry escrow account system, you can virtually eliminate all paper when entering and paying for meets!

If you miss an entry deadline, review the meet invitation to find out about entering "on deck." If the meet allows on-deck entries, swimmers can enter the meet and pay on the day of the meet. However entry fees are generally doubled for on-deck entries, therefore it is best to enter a meet during the advance entry period.

## Pre-paid Meet Entry Escrow Account Saves Time and Effort!

AQUASTAR's pre-paid meet entry escrow accounts are easy to set up and saves you from writing checks every time you enter a meet. Accounts are set up and tracked by our treasurer and work something like Harris County's EZ-Tag toll road accounts.

Accounts are opened with an initial lump-sum payment, for example \$50. Then, when entering meets, just indicate on the entry form that you would like to pay using your meet entry escrow account. The amount will then automatically be deducted from your account. You will be notified via email when your balance falls below \$10, allowing you to replenish the account and avoid a negative balance.

Using the electronic meet entry account with our on-line meet entry form eliminates all paperwork when entering meets. It also makes the meet entry process easier to do in advance, avoiding the higher cost of entering "on-deck" at a meet.

[Contact Ed Mullery](#) today about setting up an account.

## Try Using Your Bank's Electronic Bill-Pay System to Pay Monthly Training Fees

Many AQUASTAR families are now using their bank's electronic bill-pay feature as a convenient way to pay their monthly training fees. By setting up an automatic payment to AQUASTAR every month, you save time, postage and virtually guarantee you'll never incur a \$10 late fee for late payment.

Although the team cannot currently accept *electronic* payments, most bill-paying services will send a check payment for you once you set up the team as a payee using the following information:

**Bay Area Aquanauts, Inc.**  
**15403 Pleasant Valley**  
**Houston, TX 77062**  
**281-488-1582**

Contact your bank for more information about using their electronic bill-pay system. For more information, [contact Ed Mullery](#).

## Training Fees Begin February 1st for STAR Families

STAR families probably noticed they did not receive a training fee invoice in December for January AQUASTAR training fees.

This was not a billing mistake. STAR swimmers' January training fees were settled as part of the merger mechanics defined between the teams. Their first training fee bill from AQUASTAR will be Jan 15 for February fees.

## Training Group Promotions

As a result of individual efforts at the 11 and Up Texas A & M meet, **Tim Clemens** earned a promotion from White to Blue and **John Wong** earned a promotion from Gold to Senior. Congratulations to both swimmers!

## "In Your Lane"



**Name:** Sarah Fixel  
**Age:** 11  
**School:** Windsong Intermediate- 6th grade  
**Swim Facts:** S.T.A.R. member since Oct. 2004; AQUASTAR member since Jan. 2005.

**Practice Group:** Red  
**Favorite Stroke:** Breaststroke  
**Least Favorite Stroke:** Backstroke  
**Favorite Part of Practice:** Practicing relays  
**Least Favorite Part of Practice:** Warm-ups  
**Hobbies & Interests:** Reading and playing the flute  
**Pets:** One dog- Buttercup



**Name:** Daniel Shipman  
**Age:** 12  
**School:** Home School  
**Swim Facts:** AQUA member since 2001  
**Practice Group:** White  
**Favorite Stroke:** Backstroke

**Least Favorite Stroke:** Breaststroke  
**Favorite Part of Practice:** Using fins  
**Least Favorite Part of Practice:** Breaststroke  
**Hobbies:** Playing video games, reading and playing piano  
**Pets:** 4 cats- Spotty, Alex, Nala and Ashes



**Name:** Jeanette Wacker  
**Age:** 13  
**School:** Space Center Intermediate, 8<sup>th</sup> Grade  
**Swim Facts:** Competitive swimmer for almost 7 years  
**Practice Group:** Gold  
**Favorite Stroke:** Freestyle

**Least Favorite Stroke:** Butterfly  
**Favorite Part of Practice:** Emphasis on technique and Sprint Sets  
**Least Favorite Part of Practice:** Kick Sets  
**Hobbies:** Running, triathlons, art  
**Pets:** A Beagle named Bagel and a cat named CC (for cream cheese)

## Fundraise for AQUASTAR While You Shop!

AQUASTAR has mini Kroger Share Cards and stickers for your key chain Kroger Card. When you check out at Kroger's, just have the cashier swipe the bar code on the card at checkout and Kroger will donate 1% of the purchase amount to AQUASTAR. There is no cost to you! If you have had a problem with the bar code wearing off, check with the parent-on-deck at your practice pool for a replacement. You can also try laminating your existing card to make it last longer.

AQUASTAR is also part of Randall's Good Neighbor Program. The next time you go to Randall's, have the cashier or a customer service representative add our Good Neighbor Code, "9266," to your Randall's Card.

These two programs are a high impact, low effort fundraising vehicle for the team and have helped us low training fees.

Benefit of the programs has held steady at about \$60 per month between the two programs. Our goal is to reach \$100 per month. Help your team reach this goal by participating in these programs every time you shop!

## Attending Board Meetings is a Great Way to Keep Up with Latest Team Happenings

The AQUASTAR Board of Directors meets the second Tuesday of every month. Parents are always welcome and encouraged to attend board meetings to receive information first-hand and to take part in determining the direction of the team.

However, we know schedules sometimes don't allow everyone to attend board meetings. Therefore, beginning with this month's newsletter, we will periodically provide information and updates from the meetings to let you know about key decisions that affect AQUASTAR families.

## Board Meeting Highlights

**New Board Members-** The board welcomed former STAR board members Ellen Baker and Patty Hermann to the AQUASTAR Board.

**Board Resignations-** Dan Joines and Jim Kolodgie voluntarily resigned to allow for proportionate representation of former STAR and AQUA members on the board. The board thanks Jim and Dan for their dedicated service.

**Meet Hosting-** The new board discussed and agreed that hosting a meet would be an appropriate volunteer step for the team to take. Discussion was deferred on selection of meet dates and format.

**STAR Hotline-** Patty Hermann reported that the STAR hotline has been discontinued and that former STAR families should refer to the AQUASTAR website or call the AQUASTAR hotline at 281-488-1582 for daily practice schedules.

**STAR Website-** Links to the current AQUASTAR website will be added to the STAR website.

**New Coach-** Scott Slay was recently certified as a coach and added to the AQUASTAR staff. Scott will coach mainly at the Baytown Sterling High School Pool.

**Strawberry Pool Update-**The City of Pasadena approved funds in December for new heaters at the Strawberry Pool. This pool will be added to the practice schedule as soon as the work is complete.

**Clear Lake HS Pool Practice Schedule-**The CLHS pool practice schedule may be adjusted again beginning the week of Jan 17 due to restart of CCISD afternoon water polo.

**AQUASTAR Swim Caps-**A group was commissioned to design an AQUASTAR cap to be ordered and delivered in time for use during the short-course championship season.