



*West Hollywood Aquatics
30th Anniversary Party and
Awards Banquet
• November 4, 2012 •*

Master of Ceremonies: *Mike Crosby*

Anniversary Presentation

Celebration of Life

Awards Presentation

Past President

Volunteer of the Year

Most Improved Swimmer

Most Improved Water Polo Player

Favorite Lane Mate

Favorite Passing Buddy

Double Whammy

Spirit Award

Water Polo Player of the Year

Swimmer of the Year

West Hollywood Aquatics 2003-2012



I was elected President of WH2O in 2002 after having served a year on the Board as Swim Rep. Our workouts and training all year had been focused on Gay Games VI which was taking place in Sydney, Australia. It was very exciting to go to the Games with 73 swimmers and water polo players. We had just celebrated WH2O's 20th Anniversary with a big bash at the Lakeside Country Club in Toluca Lake.

In 2002 as Swim Rep I helped to organize the first ocean swim hosted by WH2O, which took place at Zuma Beach. I also introduced monthly time trial workouts in preparation for Gay Games. We continued this tradition the next year with the team training for IGLA in San Francisco. In 2003 we also had fun social events and successful fundraising activities, the highlight of which was Splash Dance on the rooftop of the Hyatt on Sunset. We introduced WH2O apparel for the first time (sweatshirts, baseball caps, visors) in addition to T-shirts and tank tops. We had such a large contingent of swimmers who went to IGLA in 2003 that we took three coaches with us and placed 2nd in the large team division. WH2O also fielded its first women's water polo team which placed 4th in the competition, while our men's teams placed 1st and 3rd. The championships that year were hosted by San Francisco Tsunami and the competition took place at Stanford University.

I served a second term as President the following year, 2004. We added a second weekly workout for water polo. IGLA that year took place in Ft. Lauderdale, Florida, and we won the Medium Team Trophy in swimming. We also took the gold medal in water polo, and our Boca Raton Aquagenarians earned us first

2003

President	Errol Graham
VP Administrative	Carl Anhalt
VP Social	Mike McGinley
Treasurer	Bernie LaFianza
Secretary	Jay Olson
Swim Rep	Dan Ferguson
Water Polo Rep	Jim Cude
Facilities Coordinator	Ximena Crosby
Development Coordinator	Charlotte Parianos



2004

President	Errol Graham
VP Administrative	Casey Schick
VP Social	Jim Ballard
Treasurer	Eric d'Arbeloff
Secretary	Garth Masik
Swim Rep	Mar Dore
Water Polo Rep	Brett MacKnight
Facilities Coordinator	Ximena Crosby
Development Coordinator	Dan Ferguson

place in the Pink Flamingo competition.

I have been very proud to be a member of WH2O since I joined in 1989, and I am also grateful to have had the opportunity to serve on the Board eight times. One of the things I am most proud of doing was compiling a Policies & Procedures manual for WH2O that I worked on with Jessica Seaton in 2004 and 2005 so that future boards wouldn't have to rely on institutional memory as had been done for many years. I have made many friends through swimming, and I have learned a lot from my teammates, my coaches, and my fellow board members. I look forward to being a member of West Hollywood Aquatics for many more years.

— *Errol Graham*

2005

President	Bernie LaFianza
VP Administrative	Dan Ferguson
VP Social	Boyd Quinnell
Treasurer	Christopher Touchton
Secretary	Derrick Sanders
Swim Rep	Mark Umbach
Water Polo Rep	Todd Shattuck
Facilities Coordinator	Luis Bahamon
Development Coordinator	Julie Wolff



In 2005 WH2O put on the SCCC (Southern California Charity Classic) along with the Long Beach Grunions and with participation from both San Diego Different Strokes and San Francisco Tsunami. The board organized this swim meet for charity with all the profit going to the Trevor Project. The event was extremely well attended by WH2O and the Grunions. Using my personal contacts we got a big contingent to come out from Salt Lake City as well as San Francisco and San Diego. Along with this event we put on "The Prom You Never Had" which was a social component to the swim meet. While we had aspirations of this becoming an annual event with rotating charities benefiting hoping to invest our team more in philanthropy in our community. IGLA that year was in Atlanta where WH2O did very well.

2006 was a Gay Games year which presented many challenges and opportunities. With the Games being held in Chicago we anticipated a high WH2O presence

2006

President	Bernie LaFianza
VP Administrative	Mark Umbach
VP Social	Ash Martin
Treasurer	Christopher Touchton
Secretary	Dan Adams
Swim Rep	Dan Ferguson
Water Polo Rep	Mike Crosby
Facilities Coordinator	Bryan Libit
Development Coordinator	Rocky DeAngelis

and were not disappointed. It is estimated that about 90-95% of the team attended those Gay Games. Prior to the Gay Games, Kiley Ames-Klein and I coached a clinic and time trials at the West Hollywood Pool, which also had a very high attendance including some people who would not be able to attend the Games. It was hoped that this would become a standard practice especially before a Gay Games, as WH2O was founded originally as a group of swimmers training for the Gay Games, but that has not happened yet.

— *Bernie LaFianza*

2007

President
VP Administrative
VP Social
Treasurer
Secretary
Swim Rep
Water Polo Rep
Facilities Coordinator
Development Coordinator

Bryan Libit
Joel McKenna
Seth Harrington
Noah Wood
Jim Cude
Dan Adams
Ben Carrillo
Brian Olver
Ash Martin



2008

President
VP Administrative
VP Social
Treasurer
Secretary
Swim Rep
Water Polo Rep
Facilities Coordinator
Development Coordinator

Bryan Libit
Joel McKenna
Boyd Quinnell
Dan Adams
Jim Cude
Matt Schmidt
Fritz Hemker
Brian Olver
Mike Wallace

Highlights during my term

- Expanded the team into the Valley and added to the number of swim workouts with the creation of Tuesday and Thursday morning practices
- Overhauled the operations and online presence of WH2O
 - New website
 - Introduced credit card billing which reduced board busywork and created a secure financial future for the team
 - Simpler administration through the adoption of TeamUnify
- Expanded National presence and reputation of WH2O
 - Return to sending a coach and group to USMS Spring Nationals
 - Federal Way/Seattle USMS Nationals – 7th Place Men’s and 12th Overall
 - Austin USMS Nationals – 9th Place Men’s and 18th Overall (385+ participating teams)
- Most importantly...mended the relationship between the water polo and swimming side of the team. As someone who participated in both sports and understood the attitudes and opinions of all the members on the team I thought it was important to work with long time WH2O members to get the team to a place where we could be one team and encourage each other in all endeavors. The years before I was president there was serious talk and over 3 hours of discussion at the previous annual meeting about splitting the team into 2 separate

organizations due to apparent incompatibility and petty disputes. Simple changes, such as having one Sunday swim and water polo practice, significantly helped in building a stronger team. Many members helped in this process such as Dan Adams, Jim Ballard, Jim Cude and more. Looking back 5 years I feel like this was a small but very significant accomplishment.

I have been a member of WH2O since 2003, which for many team members is considered a newbie! It could be easy to think of WH2O as something like your gym membership where you just show up and get a service. For me however, my most memorable and I think most significant aspects of the team are everything that happens outside of the pool. It is not always easy to meet people and make friends as an adult and for me West Hollywood Aquatics is where I found those lifelong relationships. From someone to get a cup of coffee with, to traveling with your teammates to a swim meet across the country, to getting help buying your first home. WH2O is where I have met many of my dearest friends today. I was just a kid when the team was founded and it is so interesting to hear from many longtime members their thoughts and experiences during the genesis of WH2O. I am extremely grateful for everything WH2O has brought me and proud to see my contribution in the continual evolution of the team, how it adds to members’ lives, affects the LA community at large, and is recognized across the country. — *Bryan Libit*

2009

President
VP Administrative
VP Social
Treasurer
Secretary

Swim Rep
Water Polo Rep
Facilities Coordinator

Brian Olver
Gregg Ogorzelec
Drew Pokorny
Errol Graham
**Tamara Davis/
Laura Labelle**
Adam Davis
Fritz Hemker
Amy Dantzler



clinics. And, who could forget our infamous 10 x 100s test set.

However we never accomplished what I set out to do on my platform—get an AED unit for the West Hollywood pool. I still hold this challenge to future boards. With new pool management in place, this could be possible to achieve next year.

Without a doubt, the largest and most difficult accomplishment of our board was creating a new team logo. We felt that it was important to give our team a fresh new look, that speaks to the times and people of today. This task was not without controversy, but I think today, we all still feel very proud of the job we did.

With Laura Labelle's help, we signed Hammer Nutrition as a team sponsor, and they have been supporting our team at championship meets ever since. With Errol's help, we were finally able to obtain our 501c3 form/status, which has opened doors for fundraising opportunities. We also switched our



accounting to QuickBooks Online to promote ease of transition and continuity from year to year. Due to Amy's persistence, Roosevelt finally found our digital clock. We held the first ocean and dryland

I've been a member of WH2O for 6 1/2 years, and have been coaching almost the entire time. The team changed my life in such a positive way; it really kept me grounded and made me who I am today. So often we get caught up in work, relationships, and social events, that we forget to take time for ourselves. And while this is still something I struggle with, I know I have the team welcoming me every time I can make it to the pool, and I'm left feeling refreshed and full of life. It's an addictive feeling—the more I swim, the more I want to swim. Despite the fairly large size of our team, we somehow manage to make it feel like a family, as dysfunctional as we may be at times. I recall our 25th anniversary banquet and cannot believe

it's already been 5 years. As I look forward, I dream of the day we get our new pool in West Hollywood park!

— Brian Olver





2010

President	Paulo Figueiredo
VP Administrative	Susan Shore
VP Social	Nathan Carden
Treasurer	Errol Graham
Secretary	Sean Early
Swim Rep	Chad Young
Water Polo Rep	Miguel Ramirez
Facilities Coordinator	Luke Reichle
Development Coordinator	Matt Thunell



Highlights:

- 🏊 22 club members competed at Spring Nationals in Atlanta, Georgia
- 🏊 Gay Games XVIII in Cologne, Germany where we had 30 swimmers, 1 diver, and several team members playing water polo.
- 🏊 Successful yard sale and fundraiser at GYM bar

The team has meant a lot to me in many ways over the years, but the most important thing is the friendship and camaraderie among the members of the team. It has always been important to me to stay in shape and it really helps to have friends and lane-mates on the team who support each other and motivate each other to go on with our lives in the pool and also away from it. Being on the board was something I was very happy to do because I learned more about the whole team and I got to know members and what it takes to run the team. It is very important for all of us to volunteer from time to time, and I wanted to volunteer my time to do what I could to make WH2O a better team.

— Paulo Figueiredo



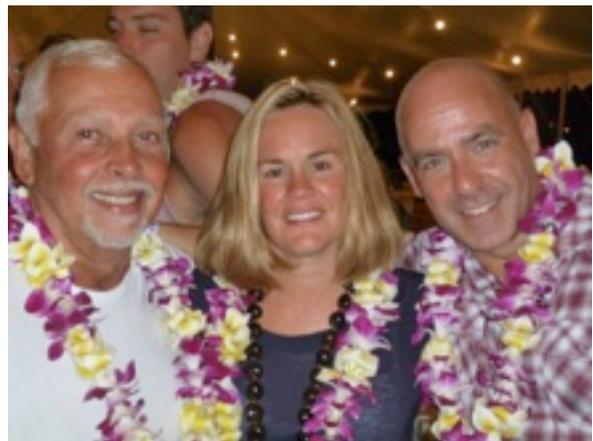
2011

President	Chad Young
VP Administrative	Bryan Libit
VP Social	Laura Labelle
Treasurer	Susan Shore
Secretary	Brian Olver
Swim Rep	Keith Kaplan
Water Polo Rep	Miguel Ramirez
Facilities Coordinator	Dan Adams
Development Coordinator	Michael Dean

Highlights:

- 🍷 WH2O's 5th place team finish at USMS Spring Nationals in Mesa, AZ
- 🍷 Hosting IGLA Hawaii
- 🍷 Continued relationship with Nike
- 🍷 Successful fundraisers at Hamburger Mary's and The Eagle

I joined WH2O in 2007 right after Spring Nationals in Austin, TX. At that meet, I was really impressed by the team atmosphere that WH2O had, and it was something I had been looking for in my own swimming about that time: to be part of a *team*. I had been part of another Masters program for a long time, but my swimming the last couple of years had become stagnant and I was losing interest in swimming as a whole. I have always been aware of WH2O's presence and long history and tradition, but my work schedule just never quite fit with when the team trained. Shortly after those Nationals, I was able to start coming to practices and it was like a whole new world of swimming opened up. I had a renewed interest in swimming and it hasn't stopped. A couple of years later, I joined the board as Swim Rep and really enjoyed serving in that role. Moving on to the Presidency the next year was a huge honor for me. I was really blessed to serve with a great group of people who really cared about the team on both boards. I know that I am better for being a part of



WH2O, and I firmly believe the swimming community is better for having WH2O being a part of it.

— *Chad Young*



2012

President	Vincent Lowell
VP Administrative	Michael Jorgensen
VP Social	Jessica Seaton
Treasurer	Chuck Larson
Secretary	Kim Menaster
Swim Rep	Erik Guzman
Water Polo Rep	Jay Fantone
Facilities Coordinator	Luis Bahamon/Olivia Karlin
Development Coordinator	Che Johnson

I have been a member of WH2O since 1994, right after Gay Games New York. It has given me a place to be physically active and compete (which is one of my priorities in life) and also be more social (with a great group of people) since I am not naturally very social. It has also been a vessel for travel that has allowed me to see places and have experiences I might never have had.—*Vincent Lowell*



West Hollywood Aquatics Water Polo with US Ambassador to Germany at Gay Games in Cologne.



To me West Hollywood Aquatics is a wonderful group of people--from many different walks of life--who provide camaraderie, competition and fun. And we all have one thing in common: we love to swim. — Coach Bram Tester



*Over the decade-plus that I have been with the West Hollywood team, my purpose for participation has evolved from: "just a place to swim" to an extended journey as a coach and swimmer. I am fortunate to have the support of a team that cares about its members and is active in enriching the swimmers' knowledge and execution of their workouts. I have met so many outstanding friends and look forward to many more fond memories.
— Coach Carole Shigaki*



West Hollywood Aquatics to me is a Family. We are here to support and accept each other in and out of the pool. I love being able to coach a group of people I can truly call my friends.— Coach JP Russell



West Hollywood Aquatics' 30th Anniversary Party and Awards Banquet

The Presentation

Hello and Welcome. Please take your seats.... I would like to introduce Mauro Bordovsky and Mike Wallace, co-founders of West Hollywood Aquatics and participants since our club's inception.

We want to welcome you to today's festivities as we look back at our 30-year history and enjoy each other's company. Please enjoy.

In 2002, shortly before 80 club members went to compete in swimming and water polo at the Gay Games in Sydney, Australia, West Hollywood Aquatics had a fabulous banquet in Toluca Lake and a special edition newsletter to

commemorate the 20th anniversary of West Hollywood Aquatics. A link to that newsletter is now available on our website. These last 10 years have been different from the first 20 years because gay and lesbian life, and life in general, has changed.

West Hollywood Aquatics had its beginnings in 1982, a time of transition for the gay and lesbian community. After the Stonewall riots in New York City in 1969, the 1970s was a decade of liberation for many. It was a time of feeling freer to acknowledge who or what we are, at least to ourselves, our families, and our close friends, and to feel proud and celebrate rather than feel shameful or be shamed. For women, if you weren't politically involved, you'd meet other lesbians at bars, parties, or maybe playing softball or bowling. For the men it was bars, bathhouses, parties, softball, and bowling as well.

In 1982, former Olympic decathlete Tom Waddell spearheaded the first Gay Olympic Games in San Francisco. The US Olympic Organizing Committee sued Dr. Waddell to stop the use of the word Olympic in conjunction with Gay prior to the beginning of those Games. Nevertheless, the first Gay Games took place in

San Francisco in 1982 with about 1,300 athletic and cultural participants. Tina Turner performed at the Opening Ceremony. Five weeks before the Games began, Ric Bohner and Richard Hunter invited gay swimmers in the L.A. area to a meeting in Venice Beach to arrange an informal group to begin training for the Games. They swam 5

times a week at

the West Hollywood Park Pool, and later travelled to San Francisco to compete in those first Gay Games. Twenty-five swimmers competed for West Hollywood Swim Club, divided into three teams due to the limit in the size of any team, as was the rule in those first Gay Games. Those three teams were Los Angeles, Beverly Hills, and Santa Monica. After those first Gay Games, Along with and under the leadership of Greg Elmore and Rafael Montijo, a few of the original swimmers formed the West Hollywood Swim Club, which contained a roster of 15 members and three weekly workouts at the West Hollywood Park Pool. Dr. Michael Roth continued to coach the team, as he had done prior to the Games. By October 1982, West Hollywood Swim Club was a United States Masters Swimming (USMS) club—the first openly gay swimming club in this country, and probably the world.

In the early years, with a much smaller club than it is now, it was not uncommon for all swimmers to go out



to dinner together after workouts. For many years WHSC only had evening and weekend practices. As the club grew, so did the attendance at workouts, and thus the beginning of morning practices in 1994, which was then nicknamed the Breakfast Club. Later on, more swim practices were added in the Valley as well as in West Hollywood. We now have eight morning swim practices, four evening swim practices, three weekend swim practices, and one water polo practice. We have five regular swimming coaches, a water polo coach, and a roster of around 200 swimmers and water polo players, including straight people, gays, and lesbians.

While our club began as a competitive organization training for Gay Games I, there has always been a very strong component of social support for members who were coming out, or who needed a healthy, fun, positive outlet from the stresses for those either infected with or affected by HIV/AIDS.

In 1981 gay men began dying of what came to be known as AIDS in 1982. By 1983, 3,000 cases of AIDS had been reported in the U.S., with 1,000 people having died. It wasn't until 1984 that the virus was identified and 1985 when an HIV test became available. West Hollywood Aquatics, like the gay community at large, was very much affected by the epidemic. It was not at all unusual for us to visit and help our sick teammates, to encourage them in the pool, or all too often, attend their memorial services. It wasn't until the late '90s, when newer drugs were developed and made more available, that we began losing fewer teammates. Our lives are no longer punctuated by attending frequent memorial services. While swimmers now in their 20s and 30s never knew the sexual liberation of the 1970s, they also didn't experience the devastation, suffering, and sadness of the 1980s and 1990s.

Being an openly gay and lesbian aquatics club took courage and strength during the earlier years. Not only was generalized homophobia more common, but there was also a lot of fear associated with AIDS. After briefly working out at the Beverly Hills High School Swim Gym, the team worked out at E.G. Roberts, a Los Angeles City pool, from 1983 to 1984. In August of 1984, our club was notified that we were no longer welcome to use that facility. Nate Holden, the



councilman for the district where the pool was located apparently was concerned that his constituents would "catch" AIDS from our use of the pool. We fought this before the Parks & Recreation Department of the City of L.A. and were successful in turning back ignorance and fear and discrimination. In 1984, our team swam in five different pools, including Beverly Hills High School, Pan Pacific Park and Rancho Park. Ultimately the City of West Hollywood came through and that has been our main pool ever since. Today there are many out gay and lesbian aquatics clubs around the country and throughout the world.

WATER POLO

Our water polo team started in 1986 through the efforts of Tom Martinez and Rafael Montijo. The players were recruited from the swimmers and Tom Martinez coached the group. The first workouts were held at the West Hollywood Park Pool, and as you know, only half of that pool is deep. A small tournament was held in 1986. Since then our water polo team has competed regularly at the IGLA Championships, Gay Games, Tsunami di Mayo in San Francisco, and also against other gay and straight teams. West Hollywood Aquatics Water Polo has had the most IGLA wins (11 out of 19) and has won at least three out of six Gay Games tournaments. We have had former National Team players, both women and men; we have players with international and college experience; we have players with high school experience; and we have players who are beginners. All are welcome and it just so happens we're looking to invigorate the team with new players now!

CELEBRATION OF LIFE –slide show

SPMA INVOLVEMENT

West Hollywood Aquatics' first big presence at a Regional Championship swim meet was in 1990, with Tom Reudy as a coach and President of WH2O. During the years Tom coached in the '90s it was not unusual for us to have 40 or 50 swimmers at a Regional swim meet. For many years, between 20 and 30 swimmers would compete in the Santa Barbara long course meet held every July and then either go out to eat or enjoy a barbeque at Michael Mealiffe and Dean

Pitchford's home in Montecito.

In 1988 we hosted our first swim meet, the All-Cal Meet, which took place at Roosevelt High School. In 1993 we hosted our first All-Relay Swim Meet for all the swimmers in Southern California. For the next 10 years we hosted a swim meet each year. The last one we hosted on our own was in 2002 prior to Gay Games VI in Sydney. Since then we have co-hosted two swim meets with the Long Beach Grunions.

In 1992, Jessica Seaton, who was our Vice President Administrative at that time, began attending meetings of the local Southern Pacific Masters Association, or SPMA, as part of the duties of that Board position. In 1994 Errol Graham began attending the SPMA meetings as VP Admin. We have continued to require the VP Admin to represent West Hollywood Aquatics on the SPMA Committee. Twenty years after our first active involvement with SPMA, Jessica and Errol are still involved with SPMA, now known as SPMS, and also with USMS. Errol is the current Chairman of SPMS.



IGLA

One of the founders of our club, Rafael Montijo, was also one of the founders of International Gay and Lesbian Aquatics in 1987. WH2O has had many team members serve on the IGLA board since its inception, including several who served as co-presidents. The first IGLA Championship meet was held in San Diego. WH2O hosted IGLA in 1991 in Long Beach and again in 2011 in Honolulu, Hawaii. We have sent large and small groups to all the IGLA Championships, including Vancouver, Montreal, Toronto, Seattle, San Francisco, Chicago, Washington DC, Atlanta, Fort Lauderdale, Paris, Copenhagen, and most recently Reykjavik.

Next year IGLA is once again going to be on the West Coast. It will take place in Seattle from August 13-18.

GAY GAMES

Gay Games has been held every four years since 1982 and we've had between 30 and 80 members participate in swimming, water polo, and diving. The Games have been held in San Francisco, twice, Vancouver, New York, Amsterdam, Sydney, Chicago, and Cologne. We hope to have a large contingent participate in Gay Games IX in Cleveland in 2014. WH2O also has had and continues to have several team members involved

with and who serve on the board of the Federation of Gay Games.

NATIONALS

The first USMS National Championship meet that was well-attended by our club was in 1990 when Nationals were held at the McDonald's Swim Stadium at USC a few weeks before Gay Games III in Vancouver. WH2O swimmers continued to attend short course Nationals, usually between 4 and 10 swimmers each year. We've also had several teammates compete at and represent WH2O at the various FINA World Masters Championships.

In 2007, with Brian Olver spear-heading the effort, 21

WH2O swimmers competed at Nationals at Federal Way, Washington. WH2O finished 12th in the Combined Team score, with the Men's team placing 7th overall. In the following year 23 swimmers competed in Austin, Texas. In 2009, with Nationals nearly in our backyard, in Clovis, California, WH2O had its largest contingent ever with 40 swimmers.. This also marked the first championship meet in

which, after years of controversy, a new system was used that separated Local Clubs and Regional Clubs in the final team scoring. In other words, local teams were not competing against Regional teams such as New England Masters or Oregon Masters. WH2O seized the moment, finishing 4th among Local Clubs in the Combined team score. We also placed 2nd among the men, although that was not listed as a separate category that year.

In 2010 WH2O had 22 swimmers compete in Atlanta, followed by 29 swimmers in Mesa, Arizona in 2011. This year six swimmers made it to Nationals in Greensboro, North Carolina. In the coming year, 2013, Long Course Nationals will be held in Mission Viejo the week before IGLA. We are hoping for a large turnout for both events. So get ready for lots of long course workouts!

OPEN WATER

WH2O has always had a handful of swimmers who enjoy open water swimming. In the 1990s many of our swimmers travelled to Hawaii each year to compete in the Maui Channel Relay Swim and also the Waikiki Rough Water swim. In 1992, several WH2O swimmers competed in the Maui Channel Swim just before

Hurricane Iniki hit. With treacherous conditions, and 12 foot waves, those swimmers did not give up. One year, our club earned some notoriety when our swimmers swam their portion of the relay in the nude. Alexia Nalewaik, who was a member of our club in the 1990s, completed the Catalina Channel 22 mile swim solo in 1995 and later on attempted the English Channel crossing. WH2O also hosted an ocean swimming event in 2002 at Zuma Beach. In recent years open water swimming has become even more popular and many of our club members compete in the local open water events. Most recently, we had three swimmers complete the Optimis 12 mile swim:

Bryan Libit, Gregg Ogorzelec, and Amy Dantzer. Amy came in 4th overall in the non-wet suit (USMS) division, while all three swimmers came in first in their division. WH2O usually has a good turnout at the ever-popular La Jolla Rough Water Swim in September.

Our club is special in so many ways. We have an all-volunteer board that runs the club. Also, several WH2O members have set or broken USMS swim records. What keeps swimmers and water polo players coming back to workouts is certainly the fine coaching, but most of all, the camaraderie of the club.



Banquet Committee:

- Mauro Bordovsky • Mary Church
- Mike Crosby • Errol Graham
- Jessica Seaton • Neal Wiener

Slide Show: Mauro Bordovsky

Music: JP Russell

Decorations: Jonathan Skow

Catering: Back on the Beach

Newsletter: Jessica Seaton

