

The Chairman's Corner

By Jon Blank

Six delegates from the NC LMSC traveled to the West Coast two weeks ago for the 2013 United States Aquatic Sports National Convention. Dixie Zone Chair Jerry Clark, NC Vice Chair Don Gilchrist, Greta van Meeteren Newsletter Editor and member of the Long Distance Committee and the Fitness Education Committee, Hans van Meeteren, Top Ten Recorder and member of the Records and Tabulation Committee, and impresario/ombudsman Hill Carrow joined yours truly the week of September 11 in Garden Grove, California. I'm proud to say that everyone was able to avoid the temptation of Disneyland, just down the road from the Convention site.



I'm also proud to note that at least half of us made the 6 a.m. workouts at the Janet Evans Pool in nearby

Fullerton. (A particularly charming aspect of that venue is the active train tracks just a stone's throw away. What a treat to swim outdoors in the early September morning, watching the sun rise over the sights and sounds of onrushing locomotives)!



Masters Swimming is fortunate to be a part of this annual event. The Aquatic Sports Convention serves as the summit for USA Diving, USA Swimming, USA Synchronized Swimming, and USA Water Polo, in addition to USMS. Our members should be proud of the fact that US Masters Swimming is the only Masters component in the world directly under jurisdiction of the national FINA representative. It is at this meeting that the five aquatic sports governing bodies plan the US Olympic effort, work together to further US interests at FINA, and act individually on administrative and technical aspects of their sport.

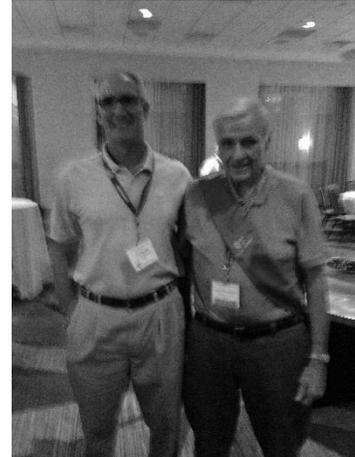


An outsider would be surprised by the complexities of governing our organization. The particular challenges of open water safety, budgetary issues, sports history, sports medicine, pool and open water championship venues, officials' discussions, and grassroots planning each could occupy nearly a full week of discourse and decision-making, yet these and other committees achieved many goals within the framework of this meeting. There were various mandatory legislative sessions, as well as a mandatory leadership-training event. I can assure you that delegates to the meeting worked hard to achieve our goals.

There were, of course, some memorable occurrences outside of the scheduled events. NC State graduate and two-time Olympian Cullen Jones draped his 2012 Olympic Gold medal around Greta's neck, to her absolute astonishment. On a personal level, I reacquainted with

one of my earliest swim camp pals (from Doc Counsilman's summer clinic in Mercersburg PA, circa 1974) and with my first Masters coach (who's subsequently gone on to develop several Trials qualifiers at her age group team in Colorado). Hill Carrow continued his 32-year convention attendance streak, and announced this year's Dorothy Donnelly Awards recipients in rhyme!

A true highlight was the International Masters Swimming Hall of Fame, which held induction ceremonies during the convention. This year, inductees from diving, synchronized swimming, swimming (both pool and open water), and water polo were honored. Luminaries of aquatic sports welcomed this year's honorees. For me, it was a thrill to see and speak to coaching legends such as Sammy Lee (who basically IS the history of US diving), and George Breen (who was on Doc Counsilman's first college team, and subsequently captained the 1960 Olympic team before his own stellar coaching career).
Editor's note: George is in this somewhat blurry picture with Jon.



Each of the 2013 honorees shared personal vignettes during the ceremony, and it was apparent to the packed hall that this was indeed a great moment. I even had the singular distinction of buying a beer for a Masters swimming legend at cocktail hour prior to the event. Then he asked me to buy him another one. Some legends are apparently legendary cheapskates as well.

In short, what a great week for aquatic sports! If you would like to learn more about opportunities to participate in state or national leadership, or to consider attending the convention, please contact me at chair@ncmasters.org. Though the commitment can be daunting, the effort will be well worth your time. I look forward to seeing some of you at next year's US Aquatic Sports convention in Jacksonville, Florida