

I had a long introduction planned for each of our board members, but now that this wind is freezing us all, I'm going to skip through that. When Stu and Byron asked me to make some remarks tonight about the history of DAM, I felt a little ridiculous. I've only been a member for five years, so speaking to DAM's 40-year history was far beyond my experience. But I would like to tell you a little bit about who DAM is today, and in particular, who the board members are who are selflessly serving our community.

Allan Crow, while not officially a board member, often feels like the eighth board member. He joined us this year as our new Finance Director, and has been doing an incredible job. Beyond simply filling his role as Finance Director, he also fully participates in a range of issues we tackle each month, and we are fortunate to have attracted someone with such diligence and energy.

Ken Petruzzelli is here with us tonight. He joined the board this year and has given himself tirelessly to advocating for our 50-meter-pool. If we ever get one, it will be because Ken attends every City Council meeting, every Aquatics Council meeting, and researches every issue to make sure people know that we want a new pool and why it's a good idea for the entire Davis Community.

Erica Fleishman also joined the board this year and has taken over all registrar duties for DAM. She is also one of the most even-keeled people I've met, and is exactly the person you want to work with as you try to resolve issues that no one seems to agree on. She is respectful and considerate of everyone's opinion, and has been a great asset to our discussions.

Jonathon Howard returned to the board after a brief hiatus, and is the person who reminds us to occasionally take the 30,000-foot view on things. It's so easy to get lost in the day-to-day minutiae of running the team that sometimes we forget to think about the bigger goals. He helps us keep them in mind.

Byron Philleo has helped organize this and every other incredible social event for the past three years. He has also taken on the duties of the Treasurer, and with Allan, has helped bring a lot of clarity and oversight to our finances.

Karen Charney is here tonight and has been on the board for more years than she or I can recall. Seriously, not only has she run Brute Squad for a number of years now, but if we get a 50-meter-pool, it will be build on the foundation that she's established during her time with DAM.

Finally, Dan Sperka has been on the board for five years and president for the past three. He has dedicated a tremendous amount of time to making sure our team continues to move into the digital age, and has been a valuable guide through my first year as president.

Finally, I don't want to go too much into a description of myself, because what I'm really up here to do is introduce Stu and Mary. I think if you ask any one here what Stu and Mary means to them, you'd get as many different answers and there were

people. So I'd like to tell you a little bit about what Stu and Mary mean to me, and how what they've built have inspired me to serve on the board.

I never thought of myself as a swimmer, and I've never really felt like I've belonged to any particular place. I grew up in the same house in the same town for the first 20 years of my life. But being somewhere for a long time and belonging somewhere are not the same thing. Twenty years of feeling like I didn't belong anywhere felt pretty lonely and, well, sad. My parents are both immigrants who came here a little late in life, so the whole idea of organized sports was foreign to them.

It was only after my second almost-drowning that my mother thought swim lessons might be a good idea. When I aged out of swim lessons at 10 years old, I begged my mother to let me join the swim team. But when my mother learned that practice was going to conflict with Greek school, she made the sign of the cross and exclaimed, "Panagia-mou, no Greek school?! Your father, it will kill him." When the Holy Trinity and my father are invoked, that was the end of any discussion.

Graduate school brought me to Davis, and a job kept me here. I was riding my bike home from farmer's market one day when I saw a banner outside of Civic advertizing DAM. You realize that to the folks on the other side of the fence, you all look like Olympians, right? But I figured I would give it a shot. I made my husband come with me as my safety date because I was sure I had left my dreams of joining a swim team too late and I wouldn't be able to keep up.

I showed up to practice the first day and went over to Stu. I said, "I'd like to try swimming," and he said, "I'd like to try coaching." So I immediately felt like we were on the same page. I very quickly learned that when the last swim less you had was 20 years ago, you don't start in lane 3. You get into lane 1. I still struggled to keep up, and when I said something to Stu, he said, "You have really long legs." I thought to myself, "Who is this guy?" And then he said, "You should use them." It was the first of many, many good pieces of advice he would give me.

After a while, I realized I wasn't just becoming a swimmer. I felt like for the first time I belonged somewhere. And that... that feeling is truly a gift. If we only looked at our swimming accolades, we'd still be an incredibly impressive team. Team of the Year, Coach of the Year, nationally ranked as a team and as individuals. You may not have heard, but this year, Mary was awarded the Kerry O'Brien Coaching award – the first assistant coach to win that award, ever.

But I think about the food drive that Stu and Mary organize, the hardship waiver program they've developed to help swimmers keep swimming through tough times, the charitable donations we've made. You may not have heard about the donation DAM made to sponsor swim lessons for foster families – eight families for eight weeks of classes. What we give is opportunities for people to build their own families and communities, and we do it through swimming. That is the vision that Stu and Mary have built for all of us, and that is the vision that I wanted to serve when I joined the board. Where I was looking for a community, Stu and Mary have

provided me with a home, and where I was looking for friends, they have provided me with family. And in the end, they turned a stray into a swimmer. So without further ado, please help give a warm welcome to Stu and Mary.