

Inside USMS

Volunteer Profile: Tom Boak

A past president still serves

Nearly 40 years ago, Tom Boak of The Woodlands, Texas, began his Masters Swimming life overweight, out of shape, and looking for a change. He certainly got one. After a friend introduced him to swimming, he got fit, started competing, and quickly became a pillar of the young organization.

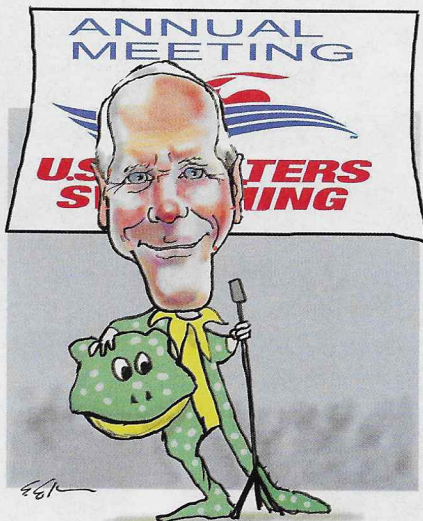
He competed in his first nationals in San Antonio in 1978 and was instantly hooked. The following year, he bid to host the 1981 Nationals at his pool in The Woodlands and won. In 1981, he also went to his first U.S. Aquatic Sports convention and hasn't missed one since. He's also served as the chair of the Championship Committee and hosted several National Championships, including the Marriott USMS Summer Nationals in 2012. That meet, staged in a Myrtha pool in Omaha, Neb., was a massive undertaking that piggy-backed on the U.S. Olympic Trials.

Although directing meets and leading the Championship Committee have been significant aspects of Boak's volunteer experience with USMS, he says his most important contribution came when he served as president from 1985 until 1989. Of his time in office, Boak says it's one of his most treasured life experiences. "It's a very small group of people who've done it, and there's a level of respect for those people that's different. My time as president was an awesome experience that I wouldn't trade for anything in the world."

During his time as president, USMS more than doubled in size and added the 18-24 age group. "It was a time for Masters of incredible growth. We went from 12,000 to 26,000 members," he says, but is quick to add, "that wasn't because of me, though; the organization had momentum, so there was incredible growth." Nonetheless, for his tireless efforts Boak has earned several awards including the coveted Capt. Ransom J. Arthur M.D. Award in 1991, USMS's highest honor.

Since his time as president, Boak has earned a reputation as something of a comedian at convention, frequently appearing in the annual skit and often donning a funny costume. In 2014, he presented to the House of Delegates while wearing a full-body furry frog get-up, complete with a removable head.

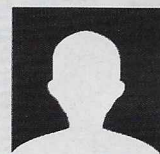
Another positive outcome of his time with Masters Swimming? Meeting his wife, Carolyn. Between the two of them they have five children and 15 grandchildren. —ELAINE K. HOWLEY



Ed Colley

WANTED

[By July 1st]



We all know lots of selfless members doing great volunteer work for U.S. Masters Swimming. We want to recognize their efforts. Tell us who deserves to be rewarded.



Each year USMS recognizes exemplary coaching, local, regional and national service, outstanding fitness programs, successful communications programs and excellence in promoting open water swimming. We also celebrate the local and regional club of the year.



Help us reward initiative and performance by nominating people you know who fulfill the ideals of the awards.

AWARDS

Awards criteria and nomination forms can be found at usms.org/admin/awards/



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