

DOLPHIN LOG

THE BULLETIN OF THE DOLPHIN SWIMMING & BOATING CLUB • SAN FRANCISCO • ESTABLISHED 1877 • FALL/WINTER 2025





Clockwise from top: San Francisco fire boat water display; Duke Dahlin and Diane Campbell; Nancy Hornor rocking her flag.



Veterans Day Swim

BY LARRY SCROGGINS

Three years ago, Duke Dahlin conceived a tribute to military veterans. Tom Callanan, a fellow Vietnam veteran, suggested that veterans were underappreciated at the Dolphin Club and asked Duke to do something about it. Naturally, Duke envisioned the appropriate tribute as an organized swim in the Aquatic Park Cove. Unfortunately, his health took a southward turn and he was no longer able to devote the time and energy required to make the tribute a reality. That's when Diane Campbell stepped in.

She had asked Duke what she could do to help him while he was under the weather. He shocked her by saying, "You can help me out by running the Veterans Day swim for me." Since Diane was new to the process of organizing a Club swim, she consulted the Swim Commissioners at the time. They offered savvy advice, "but they also made sure that I knew it was not a Club swim and they were not in charge."

In order to encourage as much participation as possible, the swim offers four different courses. As some of the participants are older veterans, one course is

from the beach to the end of the dock and back. The longest course is a full cove. For safety purposes, someone ticks swimmers off a list as they finish, but it is not a competitive event and no one records times.

Several things distinguish this event from other Club swims. For one, Diane arranged for the San Francisco fireboat to make an appearance each year. Their immediate reply was, "Of course we'll be there. What time do you want us to come? How long do you want the water display?" And when they agree to come at 0945 hours, Diane says, "They come on the dot."

Duke and other volunteers greet the swimmers on the beach, handing out American flags. Diane says, "It makes it so festive! People are getting out and waving their flag. It's a sweet event."

Duke and Diane managed their third Veterans Day swim in November 2025. Going forward, the Swim Commissioners have agreed to undertake the Veterans Day swim as a formal annual Club event. This will allow the original organizers to better enjoy the day and focus their efforts on the decorations and food.

DOLPHIN LOG

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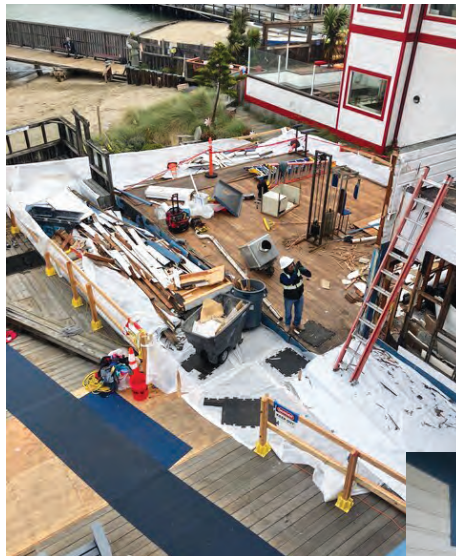
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“EVEN TEMPLES NEED RENOVATION.”

-- BHUWAN THAPALIYA



The walls come down

Temporary kitchen area



Temporary kitchen sink



A foundation to survive a tsunami



*Weight room
before demolition*

*Weight room
without walls*



The walls go up



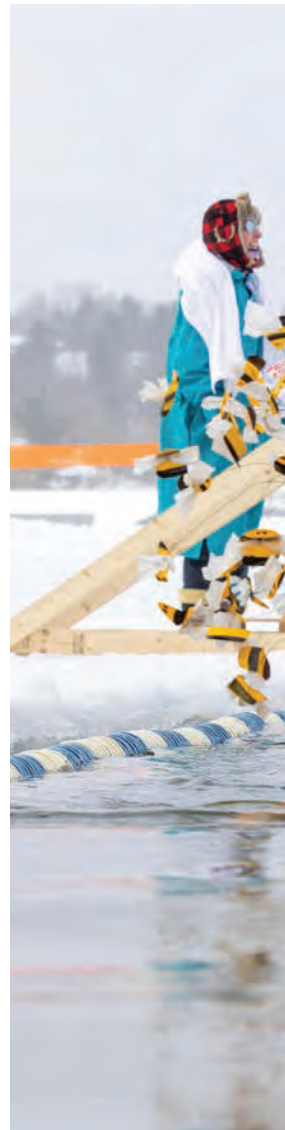
Building inspector

*Mens locker room ready
for new lockers*

FROM POLAR BEAR TO ICE SWIMMING

**IT'S NEVER TOO LATE TO GET
TOTALLY COLD**

BY PIA HINCKLE



Pia Hinckle and Elaine Van Vlek sporting their competition-winning hats in the ice water at Lake Memphremagog



I opened my eyes in the dark and checked my clock: 4:40 am, exactly five minutes before my alarm was set to go off to get ready for my 6 am swim. I am always amazed that my body automatically wakes so insanely early after I spent my whole BS (Before Swimming) life sleeping as late as I could.

It's early February 2025 and I have been 60 years old for about a month, but since December 21 I have been swimming up to six times a week and sometimes, as I plan to today, six times a day — all in the absurd pursuit of my goal: to swim my age for this year's Polar Bear Challenge.

You may be reading this as a seasoned bear who has swum many more miles than that, or maybe you think you are too slow, too old, too scared, too (fill in the blank). Well, I'm here to tell you that no matter where you are starting from, even zero winter swimming: If I could do it, so can you.

If you had told me 10 years ago that I would be swimming before dawn in the Bay without even a neoprene cap and swimming 60 miles in the three months between December 21 and March 21, I woulda said you were crazy. Guess I'm the crazy one now.

It wasn't always so. I had been a Club member for 20 years before I got the courage and confidence to try my first out-of-cove swim. I hadn't swum in high school or college. I didn't consider myself a "strong" swimmer. I mostly sidestroke. And I had recurrent panic attacks triggered by the cold water that terrified and depressed me. I longed to be comfortable swimming in the bay I loved so much. I kept at it, and little by little, swim by swim, supported by a coach and Dolphin friends, I completed the 2014 Gas House Cove swim at age 49. Even then, my fears persisted, but I kept swimming. That year I made my lifelong

dream to swim Alcatraz and the Golden Gate. And I kept swimming.

And still, reaching the 40-mile mark to qualify as a Polar Bear seemed out of reach. My usual swim was just a half mile — at that rate, how could I ever get enough squares on the big board? I was sure I didn't have the time. It wasn't until the winter of 2019 that I completed my first Polar Bear (42.5 miles!) and started to learn the secret to getting it done: planning.

How to Plan a Polar Bear

That fall, I mapped out the 90 days of Polar Bear, almost 13 weeks, on a physical calendar, noting holidays and travel when I couldn't swim. To get to 40 miles, I needed to swim at least three miles a week, which for me might be six half-mile swims or three 1-mile swims or four three-quarter-mile swims, or a mix of the three. Each week, I booked time for my swims.

The secret sauce for completing the Polar Bear: a spreadsheet



IMAGES COURTESY OF PIA HINCKLE

“It’s like swimming in a freshly shaken martini!” I yelled to the onlookers as

Pia Hickle is a recovering journalist, writer, editor, and open water swimmer. Her father is the late Gonzo writer and editor, Warren Hinckle.

HISTORY OF THE SACRAMENTO ROW



Rowers ready to launch their boats for the July 1993 Sacramento row.

BY NANDA PALMIERI

In the early morning of November 7, 2024 three Dolphin Club members set out on an adventure in an eighty-six-year-old wooden rowboat. We launched our boat, the LAWTON C. HUGHES (1938), laden with sleeping bags, some spare clothes, food, and water from the dock of the nearly 150-year-old Dolphin Club. We were bound for Sacramento. The ever-changing conditions of the Bay make every row a new experience, and yet we also follow in the wake of those who rowed before us on these waters, some in this very same boat.

The first documented Sacramento row done by a member of the Dolphin Club was in 1955. The following is from an article in the September 1955 Dolphin Log entitled 'Les Hendry Beats Traffic Problem':

Editor's Note

Nanda Palmieri has compiled a complete list of rows conducted from the Dolphin Club to Sacramento. This list is available online at <https://tinyurl.com/SacramentoRows>.

In 1927 and 1928, Les Hendry rowed from the DC to Stockton. The latter was a race in doubles among the Dolphins, South End, Ariel, and the Alameda Boat Club.

After 17 years, 59-year-old Les Hendry decided to recapture his youth and set out in a single pleasure boat, the "Don Baggiani" for a 105-mile row to Sacramento last Aug 31.

Hendry said the row would take approximately one week. "It's one way to beat traffic," he commented.

Prior to his row, Hendry sent a letter to the Sacramento City Council. The Aug 24, 1955 edition of the Sacramento Bee reports that in his letter, Hendry stated that he had rowed to Stockton in 1925 and 1927 and the resultant publicity helped that city get a deep-water channel. "Possibly if I row to Sacramento a couple of times you will reap similar results."

Hendry's row, timed so that he would arrive in Sacramento for the State Fair, got quite a bit of attention, and made it into the local newspapers, the Sacramento Union and Sacramento Bee. An article in the September 5, 1955 edition of the Sacramento Union reports:

Hendry, none the worse for wear, denied rumors that he would row home again after seeing the State Fair. "Absolutely not," he said. "I'm shipping the boat back."

The September 5, 1955 edition of the Sacramento Bee reported that Hendry arrived during the Sacramento Yacht Club trophy presentations for annual races. In an impromptu ceremony, the Yacht Club proclaimed Hendry an honorary member of the Northern California Power Cruiser Association and then gave him their Grand Sweepstakes trophy.

The next year, in 1956, Les Hendry, Ed DeCossio Sr., and Joe Daniele undertook a row to Sacramento, this time in a double, the HUGHES. They scheduled to arrive once again in time for the State Fair. The September 3, 1956 edition of the Sacramento Bee reports on the success of their row, with their only disappointment being that the clothes they planned to wear to the State Fair were stolen when they stopped near Walnut Grove. They decided their working outfits were not proper and canceled their planned trip to the big show.

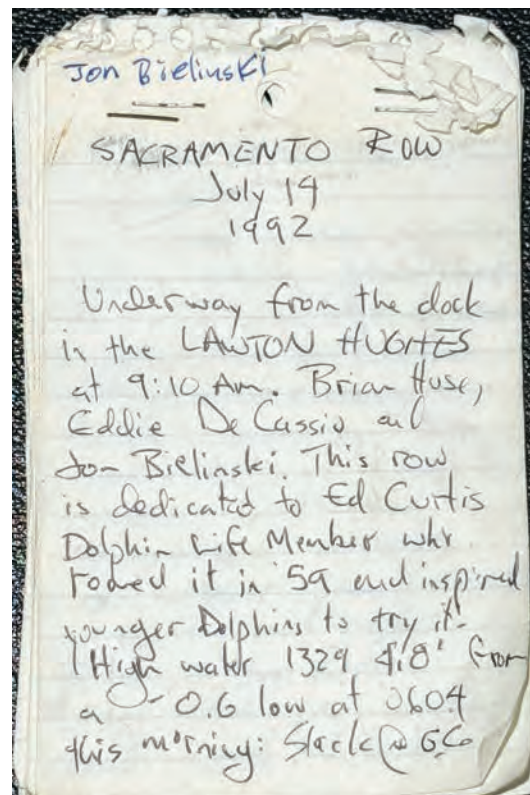
Les Hendry completed nine Sacramento rows between 1955 and 1968. His disciple, Ed DeCossio Sr., would go on to row to Sacramento every year, from his first row in 1956 through his final one in 1975, completing twenty in total. Both men did solo rows in singles as well as ones with more crew members in doubles. They also recruited more rowers from the Dolphin Club to participate in these adventures, which were timed so that their arrival coincided with the State Fair on Labor



These energetic bay area residents rowed their way up the Sacramento River from San Francisco to attend the California State Fair. Ed De Cossio, left, is from El Cerrito, Contra Costa County, and Leslie Hendry resides in Los Altos, Santa Clara County. Bee Photo

Freeways To The State Fair? Phooey. Declare Two Rowers

Sacramento Bee newspaper Sep 5, 1967



The first page of Jon Bielinski's log book from the 1992 Sacramento row.

A boat shop was created in the space that formerly held the club's second handball court.

Day weekend. Ed Sr. also brought along many members of his family: his son Ed Jr. (starting when he was seventeen), another son, George (starting at twelve) and even his grandson Joe, once when he was ten. While Joe and George, at least in the early years, were likely mostly passengers, Ed Jr. participated as a rower from the start, completing five rows during this first era of the Dolphin Club Sacramento row.

Jon Bielinski recalls that in the early 90's there were rumblings at the Dolphin Club about restarting the Sacramento row. This was a time of renewed interest in and excitement about the Club's wooden fleet. Jon had arrived at the club eight years before, having recently completed the four-year project of building his 35-foot wooden Block Island Schooner, ANNABELLE, in 1983. With ANNABELLE in Aquatic Park Cove as proof of his boatbuilding skills, Jon began working on restoring the Club's wooden rowboats, starting with the rebuild of the LANDUCCI (1948).

Jon continued working on rebuilding the remaining wooden singles and doubles, all in dire need of care from years of deferred maintenance. A boat shop was created in the space that formerly held the club's second handball court (with a sloping floor that players hated). Jon also instituted weekly Boat Night, where, under his guidance, volunteers came together to work on the wooden boats. At one Boat Night in the spring of 1992, Ed

Curtis showed up with a small notebook containing the log of the 1959 row to Sacramento that he, along with Les Hendry and Ed DeCossio Sr., did in the FARRELL. That was the final piece that made the rumblings turn into reality.

The HUGHES, newly restored at the end of 1991 (which included a new keel, bottom planking, frames, and many new interior fittings such as thwarts, oarlocks, and knees), was chosen for the first Sacramento row in seventeen years. She was also the boat used in the first Sacramento row undertaken in a double, the second overall, in 1956. The crew for the July 1992 row was Jon Bielinski, Brian Huse, and Eddie DeCossio Jr., who provided yet another link from the previous era of rows to this newly restarted tradition.

The row was a success, and ignited the imaginations of Dolphin rowers. Boat Night continued to be central to the organizing of subsequent Sacramento rows. By the next year, there was so much interest that the row was expanded to three doubles, the HUGHES, FARRELL, and VIKING with a total of eleven rowers. That July 4th Sacramento row in 1993 was also distinguished by the inclusion of the first two Dolphin women to complete one, Deborah Henning and Debbie Conti.

In June 1995, the largest Sacramento row ever took place, with five boats, the CRONIN, HUGHES, FARRELL, VIKING, and SPECTRE and an initial crew of eighteen rowers. Jon Bielinski relates how he and Padraic Doyle in the SPECTRE employed a tiny two horsepower engine as their 'third.' They would fire it up occasionally, allowing the two rowers in the fixed-thwart boat to catch up with the other doubles, which had the advantage of sliding seats and larger crews. The motor, however, eventually died. Just past Courtland, some rowers dropped out, exhausted by the heat. The SPECTRE was tied up, left to be picked up later, and crews were reassigned to the other boats to complete the row. The logistics of dealing with so many people and boats complicated this row, and from then on rows were kept to three boats or fewer.

In July of 1997, the WIELAND (1887) was relaunched after a major restoration in the boat shop that spanned five and half years. Shortly after that, plans were underway to take her on a row to Sacramento. The September 1997 'Sac and Back' row involved an ambitious plan to make a three-day over-and-back row to Sacramento. Three sets of rowers were organized with plans for



Crew of largest attempted Sacramento Row—prepared to embark

crew switches at stops along the route. Complications arose, however. Progress was much slower than anticipated. The hoped-for speed of the WIELAND did not materialize, with crews that incorporated some less-experienced rowers, as well as the difficulty of adjusting to rowing sweep oar. After arriving at the Sacramento River turnoff to Steamboat Slough, it became clear that the three-day row would not work as scheduled. There was also no possibility of extending the row with so many people's schedules to take into account. So, at that point, the WIELAND turned around. On the way back, the wind came up and was blowing hard from the west.

Darkness fell, and while the crew could see the light at the end of Collinsville dock, they could not make progress against the wind and flood to reach their planned stop. Deb Henning, the Club's Boat Captain and a crew member, made the call to turn around again and head back to Brannan Island, downwind and in the direction of the current. After docking there, Jon and Eric Hansen left to get ANNABELLE, then returned to tow the WIELAND back to Aquatic Park, the wind howling all the way. Reuben Hechanova and a crew took control of the WIELAND at the fishing docks and brought her back to the Club. The WIELAND row was a reminder that the weather and tides are central to the success of a row.

Throughout the years, most of the Sacramento rows were undertaken in the wooden Dolphin doubles, the CHAS. M FARRELL (1917), LAWTON C. HUGHES (1938) and JAMES J. CRONIN (1938). These boats are in many ways ideal for this voyage. They are extremely stable and seaworthy and have plenty of space beneath their thwarts and in the bow beneath the foredeck for all the equipment and supplies needed for a multi-day voyage. They row easily with three or even four people aboard, allowing for rowers to rotate through the rowing stations, bow and stroke, and take turns at the helm, operating the rudder. Rotating through stations and getting regular rest breaks allows for more non-stop rowing. If a fourth person joins the crew, there are four positions to rotate through: bow, stroke, helm and true rest, perched on the foredeck in the bow, simply relaxing and taking in the view.

The VIKING (1916), a longer, skinnier wooden lapstrake double with small outriggers, was part of the fleet for the 1993 and 1995 Sacramento rows. This boat is lighter and faster than the Dolphin doubles, but tradeoffs include less room for gear, less stability and ability to handle rough conditions, and a lower freeboard, making for a wetter voyage in choppy conditions.

Records of the early era of Sacramento rows indicate that rowers in doubles experimented with the time between



Leaving Locke in the hours before dawn on March 6, 2022. Temperature near freezing.

rotations. The earliest ones had rowers switching every two hours. Later on, one-hour rotations were noted. In more recent years, and continuing today, we have landed on 20-minute rotations as ideal. With a three-person crew in a double, this means for every hour on the water, each crew member rows for 40 minutes and steers for 20 minutes, moving from helm to stroke to bow and then repeating.

Single boats were also used by a few extra-intrepid rowers. The very first Sacramento row was done by Les Hendry in the DON BAGGIANI (1948), a Dolphin single. Ed DeCossio Sr. did a number of rows in singles, also in the BAGGIANI, as well as in her two sister ships, also from 1948, the SID. FOSTER and DINO LANDUCCI. It was also noted in several years' rows that, even in doubles, Ed Sr. 'rowed all the way' while his fellow crew mates took turns at the helm.

In 1998, two Dolphin rowers embarked upon the first row to Sacramento in singles since Ed DeCossio Sr. in the 70s. Reuben Hechanova in the GOOD LUCK (1976) and Deb Henning in the CECCO (1988) set out for Sacramento that July. Both made it to Benicia that first day, but Deb Henning had to drop out the next morning, needing to go to the ER because of a severe wrist injury. While Deb had participated in previous Sacramento rows, this was Reuben's first time making the journey. He made it to Sacramento through very difficult conditions. He contended with large breaking waves that threatened to swamp his boat, as well as major water releases from three dams that made fighting the river current an ordeal.

Rotating through stations and getting regular rest breaks allows for more non-stop rowing.

In August of 2006, Renee DeCossio rowed the GLADYS AUSTIN (1987) to Sacramento, becoming the first Dolphin woman to accomplish that feat, while also paying tribute to her grandfather, Ed DeCossio Sr., as well as the others in her family who made the journey. She was accompanied by Jon Bielinski, John Kortum, and Grant Mays in the HUGHES. The HUGHES rowed behind her, allowing Renee in the AUSTIN to watch where the double to her stern went and follow its lead in steering, alleviating the need to turn as frequently. Other solo rows include those by Jon Bielinski in the JOE BRUNO (1988) in 2007 and Jay Dean in the KOHLENBERG (2010) in 2015, the latter accompanied by crews in the HUGHES and CRONIN.

While Les Hendry and Ed DeCossio Sr. were the stalwart organizers and participants in the Sacramento rows of the 1950s through the 70s, Jon Bielinski took on that role in the revived tradition that started in the 1990s. He has outpaced even Ed DeCossio Sr. in the most Sacramento rows completed, surpassing Ed Sr.'s twenty rows by completing his twenty-first row in 2015. To date, Jon has done twenty-seven Sacramento rows.

During the early era of Sacramento rows it became tradition to schedule rows around the Labor Day weekend, so as to arrive in Sacramento for the State Fair. When the tradition was revived in the 1990s, rows were generally scheduled in

the summer. Many accounts contain references to the blazing heat experienced by rowers in the Delta. As time went by, some Sacramento rows took place later in the year, into October and even November. The fall often offers more comfortable temperatures as well as lighter winds.

In March 2022, the first Sacramento row after a two-year pandemic hiatus took place. The unusual time of year offered a very different Delta to the rowers, one that was cool and green, unlike the hot dry place of summer and early fall. Early morning temperatures hovered near freezing, but warmed up to comfortable levels during the day. Planning a row in the spring needed to take into account the possibility of rains and snowmelt causing strong river currents.

Dam releases, which can also happen later in the year, can also cause currents that are difficult to impossible to row against.

Finding a set of days with favorable tides has proven to be one of the most crucial steps in planning a Sacramento row. The right tides can make all the difference between a strenuous but enjoyable jaunt up the Bay and into the River, and a seemingly Sisyphean ordeal. Ensuring that most of the rowing takes place during floods and that the ebbs are not too large is the winning strategy.

Another challenge of planning a Sacramento row is deciding where to stop and



November 11, 2024. The last stretch of the Sacramento River before Miller Park, Nanda Palmieri and Jon Bielinski rowing the HUGHES. Photo by John Thorpe

tie up, both for quick breaks during the day and for overnight stays. Rowers have used a combination of public docks, marinas, campgrounds, and friends' private docks for this. Many of the same places show up again and again in records, for instance: Benicia, Rio Vista, Courtland, Brannan Island and Freepoint. Rio Vista was a frequent first night's stop in the early 90s. This made for a very long first day's row, and then involved tying up at the public dock and sleeping on the public lawn, a somewhat sketchy endeavor that one year resulted in citations given to all the rowers camped out there.

Jon Bielinski relays speaking with Lou Marcelli, the Club's longtime caretaker, about the problems with Rio Vista as a stop for Sacramento rows. Lou told Jon that he had a house in Collinsville with a dock and that the rowers could stay there. The very next year Lou's family home, the Romani house, in Collinsville became a regular stopover for the Sacramento rowers. Lou would meet the rowers when they arrived. He and Cynthia Coppi, his girlfriend of many years, were gracious hosts, cooking wonderful meals for the apprecia-

Ensuring that most of the rowing takes place during floods and that the ebbs are not too large is the winning strategy.



The 2022 Sacramento crew retrieves the Romani house sign for restoration. Front center: Jude Stalker; behind her, L to R: Jim McDonald, Eric Hansen, Julia Hechanova, John Thorpe, Nanda Palmieri, Jon Bielinski.



Les Hendry's Sacramento row gets a headline in the Sacramento Union newspaper, September 5, 1955

tive rowers. The annual arrival of the Dolphin Club boats and rowers caused quite a stir in the small community. Jon believes it also offered a small benefit to Lou, who appreciated the boost it gave him in the eyes of the townspeople of Collinsville.

As a token of the rowers' appreciation, a nameboard for the house was carved in the boat shop. Lou goldleafed it himself. This nameboard was brought back to the Club for restoration by the crew of the 2022 Sacramento row. It was restored and returned the next year by the 2023 crew.

Sacramento rows are generally one-way, due in large part to the difficulty of rowing against the prevailing westerly winds. This means that boats need to be transported back to the club somehow. In the past boats were transported on top of the lumber racks of borrowed pickup trucks or pulled on borrowed boat trailers. Singles were occasionally brought back in U-Hauls. Later, the club acquired two trailers, which we still have, and which are now used to bring boats back.

Jon compared the first row he did in 1992 to the most recent, in November 2024. He described the first one as 'exploratory.' The crew had only AAA maps for navigation and relatively little planning or attention to tides was done ahead of time. The rowing crew depended heavily on Eddie DeCossio Jr.'s recollections of the rows he had done many years ago in his youth. Jon recalls searching for a remembered breakfast spot in the Delta during the last day of that row, rowing from side to side of the River looking for this long-gone oasis. The quest to find a stop for food and drink was ultimately unsuccessful. Near the end of the row, the exhausted, hungry, and dehydrated rowers were met by Reuben Hechanova at the Sacramento Yacht Club and transported to the paradise of a booth with thick cushioned seats in an air-conditioned lounge for food and drink.



Jon Bielinski on his 25th Sacramento row in 2022, at the Freeport Bar and Grill, also celebrating 25 years.

Each subsequent year provided information and lessons on how to better plan and organize proceeding rows. Jon described the 2024 row with Nanda Palmieri and John Thorpe as, in some ways, "the antithesis" of that first one. The tides were figured out in detail, all the stops were planned, food and water were brought along or arrangements made at stops, the crew was experienced and they rowed well together, and even had pretty good luck with the weather.

The Sacramento row has captured the imaginations of generations of Dolphin Club members. It is an adventure, a rite-of-passage, and a pilgrimage of sorts. Entering the River and sloughs, levees obscure the fields and roads and towns beyond. Everything outside of the water, the small boat, and one's companions

fade away. Time slows to the rhythm of the oars pulling through the water. We make this journey again and again.

The last word is courtesy of Phil Kohlenberg who captured the essence of a Sacramento row perfectly in this quote.

Remember the end of The Great Gatsby? "So we beat on, boats against the current, borne back ceaselessly into the past." The row up the River is like this, a trip into the past as well as into the heat and mists of the interior, and all around are spirits of Dolphins who made this trip in years past and left the marks of their oars on the waters of the river."

Nanda Palmieri has served the Dolphin Club as board member, treasurer, wooden boat commissioner, and boat shop volunteer. She has rowed to Sacramento from the Club multiple times.

In Memoriam

Scott Anderson

Affectionately known as “Scotty,” Scott Anderson was born on March 21, 1945, in Columbus, Ohio, and lived an extraordinary life.

A gifted athlete and sports fan, Scott was a star baseball pitcher in his youth, famously throwing four consecutive no-hitters. He was recruited to pitch for Ohio State University, and was a member of their NCAA championship teams in 1965–66. He coached little league baseball, including the notoriously undefeated team called the “Bears.” Scott was often called, “Mr. Enthusiasm.”

While at Ohio State, Scott earned his Doctor of Veterinary Medicine degree, joined the U.S. Army, and married the love of his life, Diana Schwenker. After graduation, Scott was stationed at Walter Reed Hospital, where he was involved in groundbreaking malaria research to protect our troops in Vietnam and influenced modern medicine. During the Nixon Administration, Scott served as the White House veterinarian while at Walter Reed.

His deep empathy for animals became apparent early on—even “homeschooling” a baby chimpanzee affectionately named “The Kid.”

For more than 20 years, Scott served on UCSF Medicine’s IACUC board, overseeing the ethical use of animals in medical research, and never hesitated to shut down any research that compromised animals’ quality of life. He was also frequently called upon by the San Francisco Zoo to help with the “big cats.” His dedication left an enduring impact on veterinary medicine, animal welfare, and the city he loved.

Scott’s passions extended far beyond his work. An athlete his entire life, he remained active until the very end. He was an avid golfer, runner, tennis player, ocean swimmer, and Life Member of the Dolphin Club, swimming over 100 miles annually in San Francisco Bay. For Scott, these pursuits were less about competition and more about camaraderie, adventure, and laughter.



Nikolas Tomasevic

Nikolas Tomasevic likely suffered a seizure and drowned on the morning of August 23, according to his autopsy report. Police divers recovered his body three days after he disappeared while swimming in Aquatic Park Cove. He was 35.

Nikolas was an avid swimmer who circled the cove anywhere from three to five days a week. The route was about a mile and could take about an hour. But he also lived with epilepsy, records show, and his family confirmed. He was the first member of the Dolphin Club to die while swimming in the Cove, and the first to die in the water since Jim Small was killed in an open-water race across San Francisco Bay in 1963.

On the day he went missing, Nikolas and a swimming partner, who was not a member of the Dolphin Club, went for a swim but parted ways in the water. Hours later, after not hearing from him, the swimming partner reported him missing to the Club.

Rescue divers found his body near the Jacuzzi, not far from where he was originally reported missing.

Aleksandra Ivanova, a San Francisco resident who married Nikolas in 2023, described her husband as a “pillar” of the city’s Serbian-American community who was training to swim from Alcatraz Island to San Francisco.

Nikolas spent his childhood in Belgrade but completed his last year of school in Kentucky, where he moved to play basketball. He was a longtime server at Coqueta, a Spanish tapas restaurant on the Embarcadero.

In the words of Brendan Sheehan, “Nikolas was a true friend — full of warmth, humor, and kindness. His love for the water and for this community touched us all. Losing him this way is unimaginably hard, and our hearts are heavy with grief.”

Winter 2025

Dolphin Club Swim Results

2025 Bay Bridge

July 13, 2025

A very successful Bay Bridge swim, conditions were nice, the swimmers all got into the cove in record time! Lots of traffic around creakers but with direction from the lead pilot, we handled it all safely. Great work all around by pilots and all volunteers, it was a good swim!

Lead Pilot: Ramsey Williams / Nathaniel Berger

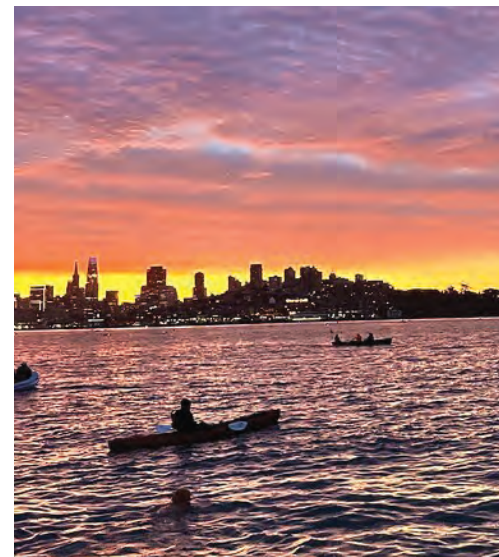
Lead Swim Commissioner: Lindsay Stripling

Test Swim: Nathaniel Berger, Lindsay Stripling, Ramsey Williams, Alex Kroeger, Nihan Tiryaki, Damian Guenzing, Ben Chun, Gina Rus, Kati Hopman

Pilots: Tim McElligott, Ellen Offermann, Ramsey Williams, Ben Chun, Dave Buchanan, Marci Glazer, Nathaniel Berger, Lindsay Stripling, Gina Rus, Jeffery Tong, Nanda Palmieri, Dominic Lusinchi, Daniel Marshal, Mickey Lavelle, John Thorpe, Ginger Watson, Blair Adamson, Rachele Mechem, Jon Bellinski, Pete Strietmann, Tom McCall, John Ribiola, Barry Christian, Lisa Weaver, Megan Wachs, Farrah Spott, Otto Williams, Tamara Straus, Sandy Chapman, Kati Hopman, Brian Kiernan, Amanda Ernzer, Erin Gasser, Virginie Eskenazi, Daniel Cavey, Liam Ronan

Volunteers: Andy Stone, Kristoffer Milonas, Kalani Leifer, Miranda Rouse, Mike Thoresen, Sue Robbins, JB Melcher, Tamar Besson, Jim Frew, Aniko Kurczinak, Eva Adamson, Aaron Rosenthal, Dawn Holley, Joby Bernstein, Carolyn Hui, Marie Sayles, Betsy Mayer, Pete Neubauer, Alice Jones, Ken Schwartz, Andy Stone, Tom Reynolds, Tracy Joyner, Eric Schupert, Lauren Brinkmeyer, Elaine Van Vleck, Henry Saunders, Eliana Agudelo, Robert Blum, Sam Spelsberg, Amy Brant, Miguel Gonzalez

Place	Swimmers Name	Swim Time	LCP
1	Allison Arnold	0:38:52	10
2	Felicia Lee	0:39:00	9
3	Joby Bernstein	0:39:11	8
4	Lissi Knell	0:40:56	7
5	Stephanie McGee	0:41:02	6
6	Henry Saunders	0:41:09	5
7	Mackenzie Kirk	0:41:41	4
8	Camden Benson	0:42:28	3
9	Dominick Kirk	0:42:37	2
10	Kalani Leifer	0:42:58	1
11	Patrick Kirk	0:43:18	
12	Lauren Brinkmeyer	0:43:32	
13	Emily Schmitz	0:44:38	
14	David Holscher	0:44:55	
15	Bill Gardner	0:45:04	
16	Steve Schatz	0:45:17	
17	Miranda Rouse	0:45:36	
18	Alex Kroeger	0:45:38	
19	Juliet Cox	0:46:05	
20/21	Ken Schwarz	0:46:24	
22	Andrew Cunningham	0:46:38	
23	Ben Clark	0:46:41	
24	Kim Gorcyca	0:46:58	
25	Michael Tschantz-Hahn	0:47:18	
26	Alisha Kewalramani	0:47:31	
27	Jeff Citron	0:48:04	
28	Tovia Sobel	0:48:16	
29	Joey Murphy	0:48:32	
30	Sean Lavelle	0:48:37	
31	Heather Warm	0:49:03	
32	Heather Kremer	0:49:15	
33	Daniel Rosario	0:49:28	
34	Elizabeth Mayer	0:49:42	
35	Tom Reynolds	0:51:11	
36	Gary Arabatyan	0:51:18	
37	Rohin Daswani	0:51:26	
38	Eduardo Nunez	0:51:37	
39	David O'Reilly	0:51:30	
40	Peter Bartu	0:51:47	
41	Madeleine Crow	0:51:47	
42	Maggie Lonergan	0:52:21	
43	Mitch Witek	0:52:34	
44	Eric Wind	0:52:38	
45	Kristoffer Milonas	0:52:41	
46	Kathleen Sheridan	0:53:01	
47	Sara Chang	0:53:16	
48	Danny Wohlner	0:53:18	
49	Margaret Keenan	0:53:23	
50	Henry Dombey	0:53:23	
51	Beth Stein	0:53:28	
52	Clara Ault	0:53:52	
53	Tracy Joyner	0:54:31	
54	Briana McCarthy	0:56:50	
55	denise sauerweig	0:56	
56	Lindzy Bivings	0:57	
57	Brooke Wentz	0:57	
58	Ally Sillins	0:57	
59	Damian Guenzing	0:57	
60	Elizabeth Sharpe	0:58	
61	Jamie Robinson	0:58	
62	Keith Nelson	0:58:30	
63	Chris Igo	0:58:45	
64	Lisa Domitrovich	0:59:05	
65	Pete Neubauer	0:59:44	
66	Pia Hinckle	0:59:46	
67	Wafaa Sabil	1:00:50	
68	Alex Buehlmann	1:00:51	
69	Peter Cullinan	1:00:55	
70	John Hornor	1:01:02	
71	Crissa Williams	1:01:30	
72	Kathleen Duffy	1:02:44	
73	Eliana Agudelo	1:02:44	
74	Carolyn Hui	1:05:14	



2025 Alcatraz

September 28, 2025

This year's Alcatraz swim was an eventful one. Although we had calm conditions, swimmers contended with a stronger than expected ebb. Over 20 swimmers were pushed past the opening and required a reposition!

It was a fun day despite the challenges, and all 54 swimmers made it safely to the Club. All participants received a towel featuring artwork by Zack McCune, which will be an excellent memento for the swim in the years to come.

Lead Pilot: Nathaniel Berger / Lead Swim Commissioner: Alex Kroeger

Test Swim: Nathaniel Berger, Sharon Wong, Ally Sillins, Madeleine Crow, Alex Kroeger, Damian Guenzing

Volunteers: Alix Marduel, Derrick Rebello, Kelsey Dean, Wafaa Sabil, DJ Nicolls, Sandra Halladey, Sam Ferguson, Thorsten Anderson, Mark Lenz, Tamar Besson, Kristen Steck, Diane Campbell, Linda Michel-Cassidy, Rebecca Tilley, Laure Darcy, Nanda Palmieri, Mary Alex, Heidi Williams, Fiona Donald, Eric Shupert, Beth Stein, Tom Neill, Andrew Cassidy, Janine Corcoran, Juliet Cox, Jamie Robinson, Elaine Van Vleck, Logan Craig, Marie Sayles, Lorna Newlin, Alice Jones, Laura Crooner, Steven Hattwick, Julia Brash

Pilots: Tom McCall, Lisa Weaver, Virginie Eskenazi, Dominic Lusinchi, Lilian Tsai, Marlin Gilbert, Nanda Palmieri, John Thorpe, Terry Horn, George Chamales, John Grunstad, Robin Hart, Stu Gannes, Suzanne Heim, Aubrey Clark, Aaron Smith, Andrew Dunbar, David Buchanan, Otto Williams, Jeffrey Tong, Paul Irving, Brian Kiernan, Rohin Daswani, Jon Bielinski, Liam Ronan, Mickey Lavelle, Even Hirsch, Diane Walton, Matt Stromberg, Tim Dumm, Damian Guenzing, Tim McElligott, Will Kushner, Nathaniel Berger, Alex Kroeger



The swimmers and pilots leaving Alcatraz on New Years Day enjoyed one of the most spectacular sunrises that San Francisco can offer.

Place	Swimmers Name	Swim Time	LCP
1	Jessica Huang	0:30	10
2	Mackenzie Kirk	0:31	9
3	Lauren Brinkmeyer	0:33	8
4	David Rich	0:35	7
5	Emily Schmitz	0:36	6
6	Chris Kelly	0:36	5
7	Ken Schwarz	0:36	4
8	Emily Ozer	0:38	3
9	Michael Tschantz-Hahn	0:38	2
10	Ben Clark	0:39	1
11	Jeff Citron	0:39	
12	Heather Warm	0:45	
13	Tovia Sobel	0:45	
14	Keith Gray	0:46	
15	Elizabeth Mayer	0:47	
16	Edwin Purselle	0:52	
17	Beth Stein	0:52	
18	Gina Rus	0:52	
19	Ernst Halperin	0:54	
20	Maggie Lonergan	0:56	
21	Clara Ault	0:56	
22	Tom Neill	0:57	
23	Sandy Chapman	0:58	
24	Marie Sayles	0:59	
25	Ken Coren	1:00	
26	Lindy Bivings	1:00	
27	Pete Neubauer	1:01	
28	Tom Reynolds	1:01	
29	Phil Gaal	1:03	
30	Sarah Roberts	1:03	
31	Miguel Gonzalez	1:03	
32	Vicki Stolberg	1:04	
33	Farrah Spott	1:05	
34	Elizabeth Ozer	1:05	
35	Ashley Hazel	1:06	
36	Will Powning	1:06	
37	Bobby Carp	1:06	
38	Crissa Williams	1:06	
39	Kathleen Duffy	1:07	
40	Aaron Rosenthal	1:09	
41	Joe Ferrero	1:09	
42	Kathy Wallace	1:09	
43	Holly Reed	1:11	
44	Andy Stone	1:11	
45	Chris Igo	1:12	
46	Keith Nelson	1:12	
47	Eric Reed	1:13	
48	Pia Hinckle	1:14	
49	Carolyn Hui	1:14	
50	Eliana Agudelo	1:14	
51	Lewis Haidt	1:15	
52	Robert Blum	1:15	
53	Dean Badessa	1:16	
54	Daniel Silva	1:16	

*Note that some swimmers were re-positioned, so their time does not reflect swimming the entire route.

2025 Joe Bruno Golden Gate October 25, 2025

This year's Golden Gate swim took an alternate route starting from the South Tower and finishing at Anita Rock, to avoid multiple inbound and outbound commercial ships transiting the Golden Gate at the same time as our swim. As we arrived for the start, fog descended and we were glad to be on a route that was still safe in this reduced visibility.

We had 82 swimmers this year, which is the largest number since 2021 when the swim was split over two days. The alternate course was slightly longer than a typical gate for our fastest swimmers, and as time went on and the Adventure Cat drifted east, the course got even longer. "Good work" to the swimmers, and "Thank you" to the pilots for getting everyone to the finish! An extra thank you to our pilot friends from next door, David Brown and Andrew Bennett, who brought out an extra motorized boat from SERC since Moon is in the shop.

Lead Pilot: Nathaniel Berger / Lead Swim
Commissioner: Ben Chun

Test Swim: Barbara Byrnes, Dominic Lusinchi, Radha Tomassetti, Nathaniel Berger, Margaret Keenan, Hal Offen, Margaret Keenan, Hal Offen, Andrew Bennett

Volunteers: Eric Shupert, Teddy Chivetta, Mackenzie Kirk, Jessica Huang, Eliana Agudelo, Janine Corcoran, Andrew Cunningham, John Henderson, Kate Lapres, Derrick Rebello, Tracy Joyner, Sue Garfield, George Robin, Nancy Friedman, Julia Murphy, Wheeler Reiss, Dave Ufferfilge, Emily Nogue, Tamar Besson, Diane Campbell, Heidi Howell, Marie Sayles, Rebecca Tilley, Gina Bianucci Rus, Stephen Hatwick, Ruby Lipscomb, Tom McCall, Harrison Dillon, Max Audette, Conor Mehan

Pilots: Nathaniel Berger, Maile Smith, Marci Glazer, Maeve Lavelle, Ben Chun, Chris Clay, Sharon Wong, David Brown, Andrew Bennett, Tom McCall, Mikhail Melnikov, Ginger Wilson, Dominic Lusinchi, Donald Osborne, Charmaine Leonard, Riley Culligan, Sam Rushworth, Barry Christian, Michelle Nguyen, David Buchanan, Grant Mays, John Robiola, Diane Jackson, Rachele Mechem, Jeffrey Tong, Gina Bianucci Rus, Sophie Hays, Steve Hanson, Brian Kiernan, Teresa Zhang, Danny Wohlner, Cathy Huang, Kimberly Swan, Otto Williams, Stephen Balhoff, Isabella Ahrens, Natasha Raine Bernie, Margaret Keenan, Kathleen Sheridan, Denise Sauerteig

Place	Swimmers Name	Swim Time	LCP
1	Allison Arnold	0:24:48	10
2	Jessica Huang	0:25:05	9
3	Lissi Knell	0:26:21	8
4	Mackenzie Kirk	0:27:30	7
5	Joby Bernstein	0:28:09	6
6	Lauren Brinkmeyer	0:29:48	5
7	Juliet Cox	0:29:56	4
7	Miranda Rouse	0:30:24	3
8	Ken Schwarz	0:31:15	2
9	Steve Schatz	0:31:20	1
10	Christophe Crombez	0:32:35	
11	Jeff Citron	0:33:24	
12	Chris Kelly	0:33:30	
13	Ben Clark	0:34:50	
14	Alex Kroeger	0:35:36	
15	Sean Lavelle	0:35:49	
16	Kim Gorcyca	0:36:02	
17	Heather Warm	0:36:03	
18	Tovia Sobel	0:36:53	
19	Heather Kremer	0:37:27	
20	Logan Craig	0:37:53	
21	Elizabeth Mayer	0:38:31	
22	Keith Gray	0:38:53	
23	Tom Bernard	0:40:31	
24	David O'Reilly	0:40:54	
25	Edwin Purselle	0:41:34	
26	Madeleine Crow	0:41:59	
27	Ben Hu	0:42:49	
28	Henry Rogers	0:42:49	
29	Maggie Lonergan	0:43:44	
30	Clara Ault	0:44:12	
31	Virginie Eskenazi	0:44:18	
32	Niki Ragone	0:44:40	
33	Teddy Chivetta	0:45:11	
34	Tracy Joyner	0:48:01	
35	Rebecca Tilley	0:48:11	
36	Lewis Haidt	0:48:21	
37	Miguel Gonzalez	0:48:49	
38	Tom Reynolds	0:49:01	
39	Erin Gasser	0:49:11	
40	Daniel Silva	0:49:32	
41	Pia Hinckle		
42	Holly Reed		
43	Lisa Domitrovich		
44	Robert Blum		
45	Connor Clark		
46	Laure Darcy		
47	Morgan Kulla		
48	Mike Thoresen		
49	Damian Guenzing		
50	Mickey Lavelle		
51	Dean Badessa		
52	Nancy Booth		
53	Nancy Hornor		
54	Chris Igo		
55	Julia Peterson		
56	Keith Nelson		
57	Ken Coren		
58	Peter Cullinan		
59	Eric Reed		
60	Kathleen Duffy		
61	Ally Sillins		
62	Scott Halsted		
63	Pete Neubauer		
64	Bobby Carp		
65	Jim Frew		
66	Kati Hopman		
67	Robin Hart		
68	John Hornor		
69	Wafaa Sabil		
70	Will Powning		
71	Robin Rome		
72	Aaron Rosenthal		
73	John Melcher		
74	Lorna Newlin		
75	Carolyn Hui		
76	Joni Beemsterboer		
77	Mary Cantini-Norkin		
78	Alix Marduel		
79	Sarah Roberts		
80	Phil Gaal		
81	Andy Stone		

Note the finish at the Adcat was drifting and repositioned twice. Times after the first repositioning are not reported, but all swimmers completed the swim.



The Dolphin Swimming
& Boating Club
502 Jefferson Street
San Francisco, CA 94109

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2026 Dolphin Club Swim & Event Schedule

Event	Day	Date	Current	Jump	Distance
New Year's Day Alcatraz*	Thu	1/1	09:16 Slack	09:00	1.25 miles
New Year's Day Cove	Thu	1/1		11:00	
Pier 41*	Sat	2/7	06:38 1.8kn E	07:30	0.8 miles
Valentine's Day Singles Regatta	Sat	2/14			
Old Timers' Lunch	Sun	2/15			
Coghlan Beach*	Sun	3/1	07:06 1.5kn F	07:30	1.2 miles
End of Polar Bear	Sat	3/21			
Start of Walt Stack Challenge	Sun	3/22			
Pier 39*	Sat	4/11	10:51 1.3kn E	09:30	1.4 miles
Walt Schneebeli Over-60 Cove	Sun	5/3		09:00	
Alcatraz Regatta	Sat	5/16			
Master Mariners Regatta	Sat	5/23			
Yacht Harbor*	Sat	5/30	10:40 1.7kn F	09:30	1.6 miles
Swim Clinic	Sun	5/31			
End of Walt Stack Challenge	Sun	5/31			
Start of 100 Mile Challenge	Mon	6/1			
Wooden Boat Swimmer Rescue Class	Sun	6/7			
Pride Swim*	Sat	6/13	09:36 1.6kn F	09:00	1.6 miles
John Nogue Swim For Science - Pier 15*	Sat	6/20	07:44 2.0kn E	08:00	2.1 miles
Swim Clinic	Sun	7/12			
Baykeeper Bay Bridge*	Sat	7/18	06:34 2.2kn E	07:30	3 miles
McCovey Cove Mixer Regatta	Sun	7/19			
Swim Clinic	Sat	8/1			
Doc Howard 45+ Swim*	Sun	8/2		10:00	
Santa Cruz 1 Mile*	Sat	8/15			
Santa Cruz 2 Mile*	Sun	8/16			
Wooden Boat Swimmer Rescue Class	Sun	8/23			
Ft. Point*	Sat	8/29	10:38 1.8kn F	08:30	3.5 miles
Swim Clinic	Sun	8/30			
Escape from Alcatraz Tri (EFAT)	Sat	9/12	07:51 Slack	07:30	1.25 miles
Swim Across America	Sat	9/12			
Swim Clinic	Sat	9/19			
China Beach**	Sun	9/27	09:55 1.9kn F	07:00	5 miles
Joe Bruno Golden Gate	Sun	10/4	09:07 Slack	08:30	0.9 miles
Swim Clinic	Sat	10/17			
Alcatraz	Sun	10/18	07:39 Slack	07:30	1.25 miles
End of 100 Mile Challenge	Sat	10/31			
Angel Island Regatta	Sun	11/1			
Veterans Day Swim	Sat	11/7		10:00	
Pilot Appreciation Dinner	Sat	11/14			
Thanksgiving Day Cove	Thu	11/26		09:00	
New Year's Day Qualifier & Holiday Brunch	Sat	12/5		09:00	1.3 miles
Rower's Dinner	Sat	12/12			
Start of Polar Bear	Mon	12/21			

* Qualifying Swim. Must complete 2 qualifying swims + help on 3 swims each year to qualify for Golden Gate & Alcatraz.

** Requires special qualifier, details TBA

All times approximate & subject to change. TBA = to be announced

Swim Program Rules

1. Club scheduled swims are restricted to Club members, who are current on their dues and fees and in good standing.
2. Swimmers must have current USMS membership, and abide by each organization's rules and requirements.
3. Swimmers are required to wear orange caps on all scheduled swims.
4. Swimmers cannot use swim aids, including fins and wet suits, on any scheduled swims.
5. New members are not eligible to swim in scheduled out-of-cove swims for either 6 months from the start of their membership, or before successfully completing the 100-mile swim, the Polar Bear swim, or the Accelerated Out-of-Cove process.
6. All out-of-cove swims require a pilot:swimmer ratio of 1:3.
7. Time limits may be imposed at the discretion of the Swim Commissioner(s).
8. All Club boats are reserved for scheduled swims. Co-pilots are encouraged. Riders are prohibited.
9. Swimmers must register during check-in and attend the swim briefing in order to swim.
10. Swimmers must successfully complete at least two qualifying swims and help on at least three swims to qualify for Alcatraz and Golden Gate Swims.
11. Out-of-town members must have successfully completed two of the last three Club scheduled Alcatraz and/or Golden Gate swims or meet Rule 10 above.

(Nothing in the above rules shall contravene any applicable Federal laws and statutes.)

Alcatraz Island
1.4 miles

Fort Point
3.5 miles

Crissy Field
2.5 miles

Yacht Harbor
1.5 miles

Gashouse Cove
1 mile

Aquatic Park
Cove

Pier 411/2
1.2 miles

Pier 43
1 mile