

VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR

The Volunteer of the Year will be presented to a volunteer who meets the following criteria:

- active adult volunteer whose efforts have produced specific, positive results in the club and/or province;
- an individual whose contributions reflect passion for the sport and its participants;
- an individual who is an exemplary role model for other volunteers, swimmers, coaches, etc. and who leads by example;
- long-term commitment to synchronized swimming and an awareness and interest in the future direction of the sport;
- past winners of this award are not eligible for re-nomination.
- any Synchro Alberta member may nominate an individual

Include at least one separate testimonial from a parent or swimmer or coach or official or other volunteer.

NOMINEE'S NAME	Karin Banasch Vail
ADDRESS	514 Reid Close
CITY & POSTAL CODE	Edmonton, Alberta T6R 2M3
NUMBER OF YEARS VOLUNTEERING	Five
TYPES OF POSITIONS HELD	President of synchro club

1. During the 2007-2008 season Karin Banasch Vail volunteered as follows:

- ran the Orca Synchronized Swimming club in a professional manner for the fifth year, constantly striving to improve the club, work with other clubs, and offer synchro to more people
- expanded the club to include adult beginners
- initiated a program where experienced teen athletes can swim despite school commitments
- expanded the club to include cross training in yoga, Pilates, dance, diving, stroke improvement, and other related fields
- began planning a workshop for synchronized swimmers in the Edmonton region
- set an example by participating fully in fundraising activities
- volunteered at events hosted by other local clubs
- grew the Orca Synchro club from nine swimmers in January 2004 to 61 swimmers in 2008 — our pool is full!
- continued to enhance the sport of synchro through collaboration with other clubs, including sharing of coaches and participation at each other's water shows
- administered Orca Synchro on a day-to-day basis, co-ordinating volunteers, booking venues, managing promotion, and so on
- prepared detailed meeting agendas and chaired full, productive meetings
- finished every meeting with a review of what went well and what could be improved
- established formal reviews for coaches
- re-established a coach mentoring program for the club
- after watching her children enjoy the sport, Karin joined in, swimming this year with Orca's SynchroMoms
- applied her training as an aerobics instructor to leading warmups for the club
- arranged for media to publish articles and photos publicizing the club and the sport
- encouraged both girls and boys to participate in synchro; the Orca Synchronized Swimming Club has had boys involved for a number of years thanks to Karin's enlightened approach
- attended the Synchro Alberta conference and presidents' meetings
- volunteered at special events hosted by other synchro clubs
- recommended that Orca Synchro, a recreational club, donate a portion of our casino fundraising proceeds to Canada's Olympic synchronized swimming team, which we did

2. We have selected Karin Banasch Vail for this award for the following reasons (specific examples of contributions within the club and/or to the province). Karin:

- has been vital to the regeneration of the Orca Synchro Swimming Club, being one of the three executive members who picked up the pieces in 2004
- rescued Orca Synchro with innovative ideas such as lane swimming for swimmers' parents and free family swimming for other family members of registered athletes
- values and promotes purely recreational synchronized swimming for the love of the sport
- expanded the club to include children from 5 to 18, ensuring that so every child has a place to synchro swim
- led interclub participation, consistently inviting other synchro clubs to send demonstration teams to Orca Synchro water shows and in turn sending our teams to shows hosted by other clubs
- strove to improved the administration of the club through review and mentoring by experienced administrators
- develops synchro coaches, not just by hiring coaches who return to the club year after year but by engaging coach mentors to develop skills through ongoing monitoring and by hosting special events for coach development
- acknowledges the skills of coaches in other clubs and fosters interclub relations by having others' coaches lead Orca Synchro summer camps
- excels at recruiting club members to perform volunteer duties and attend board meetings, expanding the contingent of regularly attending board members from three to eight
- applies her considerable MBA project management training and experience to the running of the club. Her meeting agendas are superb, full and detailed, with time allotted for each item; as well, Karin maintains a detailed ongoing list of actions to be performed by volunteers.
- conducts legendary postmeeting plus/deltas, enabling club volunteers to express both positive and negative attributes about meetings
- consistently takes time to review completed events as well as planning for the future; this approach has given the club a history to learn from and ensures constant improvement in the club
- spearheaded the collection of club knowledge on our website. Our detailed knowledge base is a tremendous resource for current and future board members. For example, the minutes of all Orca Synchro meetings for the last five years are available online in a searchable format.
- has tremendous organizational skills, and she applies them wholeheartedly to the Orca Synchronized Swimming Club and the sport of synchronized swimming

3. Quote from the nominee that illustrates his/her philosophy about volunteer work:

I volunteer because I want to make a difference, primarily in the lives of my children and with the greater community we live in. Volunteering, especially with the Orca Synchro club, allows me to take an active role in one of the sports that my children participate in and lets me help shape the sports club that they belong to. Volunteering is also an opportunity for learning, sharing, and fun as I am working together with other volunteers who also want to contribute to a cause or event for the benefit of others.



As head coach of Orca Synchrono for the past four years, I have had the pleasure of working with Karin Banasch Vail and the entire Orca Synchrono board. Karin was one of the women who reinvented the club as a recreational synchro club in the winter of 2004. Since I first met Karin at the Synchro Alberta conference in Leduc in 2003, she has been eager to learn about the sport of synchronized swimming. Not only has she taken on the role of president, Karin also participates as a member of the newly created Orca SynchroMoms team. Karin is dedicated to improving the fitness level of all our swimmers and also to the idea of family health. Karin has ensured that a portion of the pool is always available during Orca practices for lane swimming. Karin puts in enormous amounts of time and energy to ensure that Orca Synchro keeps on improving and growing.

Karen Wilson Davis,
Past Head Coach,
Orca Synchronized Swimming Club

It has been my pleasure to work with Karin Banasch Vail on the board of the Orca Synchronized Swimming Club for the past five years. Karin is an outstanding volunteer. She brings great leadership and organizational skills to our club. It would be impossible to count the hours that Karin has invested in our club to ensure that it is running smoothly today and that a plan and vision are in place for the future. Karin has a unique ability to strike a balance between making volunteering fun and being "all about business." We have all learned a lot from Karin about running a productive and on-time meeting. She has contributed to making the Orcas a great place to swim for her children and all of the athletes. Many parents have told us that the Orcas is the most well managed organization that they have ever been involved in, which is in large part to Karin's efforts. I consider it a privilege to work with Karin.

Janet Vanderveen
Vice-president,
Orca Synchronized Swimming Club

NOMINATIONS FORMS MUST BE SUBMITTED TO:

**SYNCHRO ALBERTA
11759 GROAT ROAD
EDMONTON, AB
T5M 3K6
FAX: 780-415-0056**

**NOMINATION DEADLINE IS JUNE 15, 2008.
NO NOMINATIONS WILL BE ACCEPTED AFTER THE DEADLINE
AND NO EXTENSIONS WILL BE GIVEN.**



A digital photo of then nominee must be e-mailed to ksaunders@synchroalberta.com as part of the nomination.