

Greater Richmond Aquatic League

Board of Directors Meeting

July 7, 2025 at Bell Creek

Next meeting: Sunday, September 21, 2025 at 7pm—TBD

The Greater Richmond Aquatic League (GRAL) is an organization of swimmers, coaches, and parents whose aim is to promote and participate in the sport of summer swimming. GRAL provides an opportunity for young people to compete against others of similar ability in an atmosphere of fair play, good sportsmanship, and safety.

Meeting called to order at 7:04pm

Roll Call

- **Present:** Ashcreek, Ashland, Atlee, Battlefield Green, Bell Creek, Burkwood, Canterbury, Chestnut Oaks, Church Run, Colonies, Federal Club, Goochland, Hanover, Hungary Creek, Kings Charter, Mechanicsville, Milestone, Old Church, Pebble Creek, Raintree, Rockville Dolphin Club, Tuckahoe Village West, Twin Hickory, Wellesley, Wembly, Wyndham
- **Absent:** Dominion Club, FoxHall

President's Report: Julie Zubris (Rockville) president@gralva.com

- At the end of 2025 we will need several new Exec Board members: President, Treasurer, VP of Training & Certification, and VP of Equipment and Technology. We will vote the new positions in at the Sept meeting.
- The scholarship applications have closed and we have 18 candidates! The scholarship committee is hard at work evaluating all the applications and winners will be announced at Champs. There are a lot of great applications. We have lots of amazing kids in the league!
- Teams need to make every effort to get their meets in on Tuesday night. Forecast has slightly improved, so hopefully there won't be thunderstorms, but families need to be prepared to wait it out to get the meet completed. With the very tight timeline for Champs, meets need to be finished Tuesday and in worst case scenario, on Wednesday.
- SwimTopia (ST):

- Been a huge learning curve for many people, but overall has gone well at the team level. Many coaches have expressed positive comments regarding the ease of meet entries.
- One of the main issues is computer reps not using the provided manual (which was strongly requested)—many errors are occurring because the steps are not followed (ie. not filtering for ribbon printing or printing the heat sheets for all events when the manual says to only print for events 2-51).
- Relays—the computer manual states that printing heat sheets should not include the relays. This needs to be followed as there has been confusion across multiple teams. Because of GRAL's 2:00 and 4:00 times for relays, the seeding in ST is not GRAL accurate. Teams are being placed side by side in lanes instead of alternating. Most clerks seem to be changing the seeding to be accurate for GRAL on the relay cards, but then it will not match the heat sheet. This is not really a ST problem, this is a GRAL problem due to our complicated rules, so not sure it is something ST can solve.
- Investigating some items for improvement for next year.
- Some items brought up by reps: Lag time, codes not lining up to DQ cards, meet report via swimmer like in Hytek
- Please email any suggestions to president@gralva.com that your team has for ST.
- In person registration for Champs is Saturday, 7/12. Part of the payment that is made on Saturday includes additional regular season swimmers. The league captured your roster numbers at the beginning of the season. Any team with issues regarding registration received an email with the pertinent information. On Wednesday, after the last meet, we will again look at your roster numbers to determine any additional swimmers. The goal is to email that specific number/amount out to teams, but it is a really busy GRAL week with the last meet, team banquets, Champs prep, and scholarship applications. We strongly encourage teams to bring a blank check on Saturday to registration so we can confirm numbers together before the check is written. If you are a team that needs to have the check written before Saturday, let president know by Wed. morning and we can be sure to email you with your additional swimmer fees.
- Goal this season has been to simplify and streamline. We've made progress in this area, but definitely could find more ways to improve and simplify. Before the annual meeting in September, we would really appreciate feedback with ideas for how we can continue to simplify rules and processes to ease the load on the league workers as well as team leadership and volunteers.
- June meeting minutes: Federal club made motion to approve, Bellcreek seconded. None opposed; accepted into the record.

Secretary Report: Michelle Shores (Battlefield Green) secretary@gralva.com

- No report

Treasurer Report: Cindy Anderson (Raintree) treasurer@gralva.com

- Balance is \$40,912.
- Will be purchasing insurance for Champs.
- Many checks will be written this month with Champs

VP of Officials Report: Tom Connolly (Pebble Creek) officials@gralva.com

- Staff roster of officials for Champs will be coming out soon. All the same rules apply to Champs as do at regular season meets.

VP of Training and Certification: Debi Knott (Wembly) training@gralva.com

- No report

VP of Equipment (and technology) Report: Moira Sweazey (Hanover)
equipment@gralva.com

- DQ cards are availbe for those having home meets this week. Please use them sparingly as they are expensive. Swimoutlet no longer sells them and we have to purchase them from a printer.
- There will only be clear cases on the medals at champs for some 1st place and maybe some 2nd place finishes. GRAL opted to purchase bags instead for the other places that were much more cost effective. (\$90 for bags vs. \$3600 for boxes)
- Teams do not have to count their ribbons at the end of the season. We know how many you should have after your meets conclude.

Computer Coordinator Report: Ralph Jones ralph@gralva.com.

- ST has worked very well, but it can be “buggy”. We are asking for some improvements for next year.
- There are a lot of things that need to happen for Champs to run smoothly. Only ST entries will be accepted for Champs. We know that the interface can accept other files, but it is not visible on the backend and therefore will not be condusive to the Champs workflow. If you team does not use swimtopia for Champs entries, your team WILL NOT swim in Champs.
- Meet manager will be used at Champs, so the results will be in Meet Mobile (we know many people canceled their subscripotions). The results may be in ST app, no guarantee, but they will also be posted at SwimRVA during the weekend.
- Send any suggestions for ST to Ralph or president so they can be sent to ST.
- Champs relay time standards will be sent out tomorrow.

VP of Champs Report: Heather Jensen and Sarah Butler champs@gralva.com

- ALL entries must be entered into SwimTopia—no exceptions for any team regardless of how you have done it in the regular season.
- Families should not be attending Champs registration. Only the Champs Coordinator attends for each team.

- Volunteer slots will come out this weekend. The # of volunteers are based on the # of swimmers. Your team MUST fill all volunteer slots.
- Changes to Champs this year include more volunteers (someone to hand out lunches) and the check in process (need names of bleacher monitors)
- Only coaches should go get medals. (had some missing last year)
- Champs coordinators have all the info for drop off/registration and pickup.
- Coaches should practice whistle starts with their swimmers.

Old Business

- None

New Business

- 2025 GRAL Meeting dates
 - Sunday, September 21st (in-person) **Need location**
- Champs = Saturday, July 19th and Sunday, July 20th

Good of the League – Julie shared how two computers can be used at the same time during the meet. One computer can do the time entries for results and the second is hooked to the printer to print the audit sheets, results, and ribbon labels. It keeps the computer rep from having to toggle between screens. Of course this only works if you have two people and two computers.

Adjourned at Motion by Federal Club, second by Pebble Creek

Submitted by Michelle Shores. Secretary