

2009 TWQA CONVENTION & EXHIBITION RECAP

By Daina Grace, Executive Director

It is hard to believe that the 2009 Convention and Exhibition is already over. Every year it comes and goes faster than the year before! When looking back at the convention as a whole I truly feel that Convention Chairman Perry Ratcliff hit the nail on the head with the slogan “**Better Together**”. In these challenging economic times it is important that we use all of the business resources available to us wisely. I truly hope that those who attended the 2009 Convention left with the feeling that it was a wise choice to attend!

This was the 36th year that TWQA has hosted an annual convention & exhibition with this year’s being held at the beautiful South Shore Harbour Resort & Conference Center in League City, Texas. The activities began on Wednesday with the Board of Directors’ meeting. These meetings are always open to everyone and are a great way to see how TWQA operates. Immediately following the meeting attendees were invited to the President’s Welcome Reception for food, fun and of course some great drinks!. A special thank you goes out to **JO GRACE** for her donation of the “adult beverages” which allowed for all proceeds from bar sales to be donated to PAC.

Thursday began with the annual TWQA Golf Tournament which was held at Canongate at Magnolia Creek Golf. This was a LYNKS course which offered new and challenging hazards for our members. Not only did they have to deal with tall grass and wind, they had to do all of this in 100 plus temperature. Only true golfers would be that resilient !!! Ron Dobbs, Golf Chairman, recognized the winners from the tournament at the Annual Banquet on Thursday evening. The winners were:

1st place team - Phil Matthews, Terry Begnaud, Nicolas Matthews & Pete Mocho

2nd place team - Shawn Talley, Dave Smith, Robert Kersey, & John Miller

3rd place team - Delton Kayga, Scott Shadrach, Mark Cartwright & Bill Barlow

Longest drive – Nick Matthews Closest to the pin - Phil Matthews

***Thank you to Water-Right, Inc. for sponsoring both the Longest Drive & Closest to the Pin Contests.**

Thursday evening’s festivities began with a cocktail party followed by the Awards Banquet. President Perry Ratcliff opened the evening by recognizing the TWQA Board of Directors, TWQA Past Presidents, TWQA new members and guest Mr. Vince Kent, WQA President. Thank you to **TATE BURKHARDT** for running the slide show once again. The golf photos always add a lot to the dinner table conversation!

Membership Chairman Jimmy Lewis presented the **MEMBERSHIP AWARDS**. Those members present were recognized for the following membership periods:

5 years: Arrow Industries – Brea, Ca

Culligan Water – Houston, Tx

25 years: Hydro Systems – Harlingen, Tx

Shelton’s Water Refining – Arlington, Tx

35 years: Culligan of Kerrville, Inc. – Kerrville, Tx

Culligan Southwest, Inc. – San Antonio, Tx

Perry Ratcliff returned to the podium to present the **SUPPLIER AWARDS**. The first award presented was the **Commitment Award** which is a longevity award for a supplier company member that has endlessly supported the association through

continuous membership activity for at least 7 years. This year's winner was **Charger Water Treatment Products**.

The next award presented was the **Top Sponsorship Award**. This award is an active supplier company member that has continually made significant financial commitments to support the TWQA at its annual meetings, and in the training and legislative committees of the TWQA. This year we had three supplier companies honored: **Pentair Water, United Salt Corporation & WATTS Water Quality & Conditioning**.

The final Supplier Award was the **Golden Service Award**. This award goes to a supplier company that demonstrates a commitment to TWQA by allowing its employees to participate in committee work, attend meetings and work behind the scenes to support not only the association but also the water treatment industry. TWQA proudly presented this award to five companies: **Dan Humphries Sales Company, Pure & Gentle Soap, TexSon Water, United Salt Corporation & WATTS Water Quality and Conditioning**.

The highlight of the Awards Banquet is always the Individual Awards. The following individuals received the following honors:

Meritorious Service Award - This award goes to an active member of TWQA of high moral character who has rendered many years of dedicated and faithful continuous assistance and guidance to the TWQA and its members. This year's winner was **JIMMY LEWIS**.

Man of the Year Award - This award is given to an untiring and dedicated water conditioning professional of high moral character and with an unselfish desire to assist newcomers in the profession. Recipient must be an active member of TWQA and be instrumental in planning and presenting programs for TWQA, regional schools, and annual meeting. This year's winner was **RYAN LESSING**.

Lifetime Membership Award - This award is given to those individuals who have devoted a large portion of their life to the continued support of the Texas Water Quality Association. This year we had three individuals who received this award: **LARRY GAYLER, CECIL HOPPER & ALLENE HOPPER**.

Sonny Cammack Award – This award is given in appreciation of the dedicated service to the water quality industry and for providing leadership which represents the spirit in which our Association was founded. This year's winner was **PERRY RATCLIFF**.

Gib Boerner Award – This award is given in appreciation of the continued use of the ideals for which this Association was created: Honesty, High Ethical Standards, Humility and Integrity in both the business and personal spheres of life. This year's award was given to **DON MCGHEE**.

CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL AWARD WINNERS!

The Thursday evening festivities were concluded with the **First Annual Karaoke Night**. United Salt Corporation sponsored this event that proved to be a lot of fun for all and humbling for others. For those of you who participated – thank you. It is amazing to see the talent among our TWQA members. For those of you too shy to participate – we will get you next year!

Friday began with the **General Session & Annual Meeting**. This meeting is where the TWQA membership hears how the Association did in all areas over the past

fiscal year. The overall consensus was that TWQA is doing well. We are holding our own and still adding new members on a regular basis. The 2009 – 2010 Board of Directors were voted on by the membership and sworn in by Bob Boerner. Thank you to all those chosen to serve. Kristi Stanford was the lucky winner of the \$100.00 early bird drawing which she donated to PAC.

Mr. Vince Kent, President of the Water Quality Association, was the guest speaker at the General Session. He discussed several important topics in his State of the Industry that are affecting all areas of the United States, gave a Valve & Tank Shipment report, reviewed the NOWRA Agreement and discussed the Battelle study. WQA does a lot of great work which benefits ALL water dealers so please support WQA!

Friday afternoon was devoted to the EXHIBITION & TRADE SHOW. We were pleased to have 44 exhibitors this year with a wide variety of products. Attendance is never as high as I would like to see but most of the exhibitors seemed to be pleased. WQA had a drawing for a convention packet to the Mid-year Convention to be held in Orlando in March 2010. The winner was MELINDA KERSEY – Congratulations Melinda!

The Friday evening sponsored function was a trip to Minute Maid Park to watch the Houston Astros play the Washington Nationals. 53 individuals boarded buses to the baseball field where they were taken to the “Club Level” for a private buffet and bar. Attendees enjoyed all of the traditional baseball foods: hot dogs, nachos, frito pies, peanuts, cracker jacks and the non-traditional fresh fruit. And if the food wasn’t enough, those in attendance were treated to a *bottom of the 9th - come from behind win* by the Astros followed by a world class fireworks show. The evening was one to remember!

The quality of the convention is usually judged by the quality of the business and technical sessions. I am pleased to say that this year our sessions were very well attended and well received. Thank you to the following presenters of these sessions: **Dave Smith - Pentair Water, John Blount - Pure & Gentle Soap, Richard Pickard - Independent Banker, Carl Galletti - ResinTech, Scott Buss - TexSon Water, Jeff Meyer – WATTS, and Marc McHose - Nevada Computers.** These individuals did a great job and we truly appreciate their willingness to conduct these sessions.

Putting together the annual convention & exhibition is not an easy task and can not be done without the help and assistance of many people. First I would like to thank the board of directors for their endless work and assistance throughout the year on promoting the convention. I would like to thank Ron Dobbs for handling the golf function, Jo Grace for her never ending assistance at the registration desk, Perry Ratcliff for picking up all of the missing pieces at the last minute and lastly to my husband, Rick, for putting up with my craziness.

TWQA is a great association because TWQA has great members. Get more out of your membership by being active and attending the conventions. You won’t believe just how much you learn just by talking to other people in the same industry. I hope to see you all at the 2010 convention in Fort Worth!