

USMS COMMITTEE REPORTS

BLOCK #3 – Teaming Together... To spread the word Communications, Marketing, Publications, Registration

BLOCK PARTY

**Wednesday, September 10th, 7:30-9:00pm
Meeting Room – ROYAL PALM FOUR**

COMMUNICATIONS

Committee Chair: Hugh Moore

Vice Chair: Michael Moore

Committee Members: Rich Barkan, Helen Bayly, Katherine Casey, Kelly Cooper, George Cunningham, Betsy Durrant, Mel Dyck, Tracy Grilli, Tom Hindle, Brad Houston, Sarah Hromada, Mark Hurley, Kenn Lowy, Esther Lyman, Tom Lyndon, Dennis McManus, Sandy McNeel, Nancy Miller, Margot Pettijohn, CJ Rushman, Carl Saxton, Meg Smath. Ex-officio: Jim Matysek, Bill Volckening. Executive Committee Liaison - Lynn Hazlewood.

ANNUAL REPORT

I would like to congratulate Tracy Grilli, Jim Matysek, and Bill Volckening. While performing their duties as USMS National Office Administrator, USMS Webmaster/IT Director, and USMS Magazine Editor respectively they are responsible for a significant amount of communications within USMS. It has been a pleasure to work with all three.

1. The Communications Committee was asked by the Executive Committee to discuss the idea of charging a fee for non-sanctioned events to be listed on the website's Calendar of Events. The Committee unanimously voted against the idea and the Executive Committee decided to continue to list non-sanctioned events for free.
2. Mark Hurley chaired a sub-committee that developed an "effective Web Content" section for the LMSC handbook. We expect this to be a useful aid for LMSC and club Webmasters
3. Many members of the committee contributed to the "April Fools Project" on the USMS Website. Jim Matysek developed an amazingly ugly color scheme for the Discussion Forums. A thread on "Increasing Revenue for USMS" was also included. Mixed in with the outlandish ideas were some sound principles that USMS should keep in mind as we plan our future.
4. Meg Smath and Carl Saxton helped Bill Volckening in selecting the TYR/USMS Newsletter Of the Year.
5. The committee discussed the possibility of changing the emphasis of the USMS home page toward either more news or marketing. There was little support for a change in either direction.

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6. The committee discussed the merits of allowing swimmers to opt-out of SWIM Magazine subscriptions. The idea was overwhelmingly rejected.
7. Eleven committee members responded to a survey that evaluated articles in the May/June issue of SWIM Magazine. Results were shared with Bill Volckening and Phil Whitten.
8. Michael Moore is chairing a sub-committee that is investigating revising the navigation scheme used within the USMS web site and restructuring the site to accommodate the new scheme.
9. The committee is reviewing the committee description in the Rule Book.
10. As Committee Chair, I participate in a monthly conference call with Lynn Hazlewood and Jim Matysek. The meeting serves as a review of Jim's activities as Webmaster. I also represent the committee on the Data Base Task Force.

ACTION ITEMS

1. The committee unanimously rejected the idea of charging a fee for non-sanctioned events to be listed on the website's Calendar of Events

AGENDA

Thursday, September 11th, 4:30-6:30 pm
Meeting Room – ROYAL PALM FIVE

1. Introductions
2. Report from the "Effective Web Content" sub-committee
3. Report from the "Website Navigation" sub-committee
4. Review of committee description
5. Welcoming new swimmers
6. What can the Communications Committee do to help:
 - WebMaster
 - SWIM Magazine Editor
 - National Office
 - LMSC Communications

MARKETING

Chair: Richard Burns

Vice Chair: Doug Garcia

Committee Members: Joan Alexander, Nadine Day, Clay Evans, Mel Goldstein, Bill Grohe, Nicole Harvey, Michael Heather, Dan Kornblatt, Mike Laux, Tom Lyndon, Judy Martin, Jane Masters, Debbie Morrin Nordlund, Randy Nutt, Robert Oppenheim, Melissa Rinker, Jeannette (Jett) Vallandighm, Bill Volckening, Phil Whitten. Ex-Officio – Barry Fasbender, Aimee Fitzgerald. Executive Committee Liaison – Nancy Ridout

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ANNUAL REPORT

The Marketing Committee focused its attention in two primary areas: the redesign of the USMS brochure and on-going public relations efforts.

BROCHURE

Doug Garcia created the new brochure with help from a number of sources, and two printings of 10,000 copies have been printed and distributed through the main office. The brochure is oriented to demystifying Masters and explaining the features and benefits of the program. Based on the need to print a second run it has been well received.

PUBLIC RELATIONS PROGRAM

The public relations focus is in its second year, with exclusive concentration on news media relations, and we believe that we are benefiting from this outreach. To maximize resources and be as time-effective as possible in reaching the mass-market consumer audience that USMS leadership established as a key priority, we have developed fitness-oriented tips and packaged these as media tip sheets positioning USMS as a swim fitness expert. We began to use an affordable media distribution service to distribute these advisories and news releases on a targeted mass basis so that we can spend more time individually targeting the specific media outlets with true interest in Masters swimming.

PHOTOS

We resolved the time-consuming issue of photo use, enabling us to utilize photos in our possession and continue communicating with the media to establish USMS as a key news source. In producing the brochure, just as we have found with news media relations, we are lacking in the extent of our photo file and will be looking for ways to address this issue in a way that will meet multi-purpose communications needs.

RESULTS

Results of this strategy have been impressive to date. Writers from media outlets including Runner's World, the Gwinnett Daily Post, Health Magazine, Essence Magazine, Heart & Soul, NikeGoddess.com, Ms. Fitness, and the Baltimore Sun have interviewed USMS sources. Articles mentioning or featuring USMS have appeared in mass-market media throughout the country, including Business Week, the St. Augustine Record, Aging with Style, Texas Jewish Post, Baltimore Sun, Senior/Boomer Times, West Texas County Courier, active.com, Jamestown (NY) Post-Journal, Indianapolis Star, Palm Beach Sun, and Florida Elder Update.

By almost every measure, the program is a strong success. PR is an attritional process at best and we have done very well. One measure of success is the amount of coverage in the media, and we have the results to know we have done well. (And for the first time, we have a tracking mechanism and can see at least some of our results in the media.) How the press exposure translates into new members is the difficult part of the equation and is predicated on factors that are beyond the control of this committee.

We believe that we have met and exceeded the goals for a PR effort on the allocated budget. I personally believe that the PR counsel has added the measure of professionalism and structure to USMS marketing that I had hoped for. My relationship with Aimee has been productive and focused. She has been extremely responsive to the direction we have provided and is a zealous advocate for this organization. She has gracefully accommodated the idiosyncrasies of USMS as a client and served us well. I believe the momentum that we have established will yield even greater results going forward and I thank everyone for their trust in this program.

MOVING FORWARD: 2004

COLLATERAL

With the completion of the new brochure, we are turning our attention to other collateral support activities. We will be producing a series of posters that can be downloaded and printed from the web site.

PLANNER

There were a number (+/-25, not a lot but representative of a larger silent constituency) of calls or e mails expressing disappointment in the absence of the Planner this year. We have budgeted for a limited run in 2004 and the committee will be deciding whether to resurrect this program and if so, how.

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WEB SITE

One of the most critical areas is improving the effectiveness of the Web site as a marketing tool, given its prominence and opportunity to be the key, most cost-effective, tool we have. We will be establishing a sub-committee to spearhead this initiative.

PUBLIC RELATIONS

OBJECTIVES

1. Expand, enhance spokesperson base
We will be developing ways to expand a the cadre of *trained* spokespersons to offer greater breadth in the news media relations area while maintaining a focused, well-formed core. We especially need to designate a dedicated position of one of the executive officers to assume an admittedly time-consuming, demanding role of executive spokesperson.
2. Media training
We will refocus attention to the grassroots level through media training of key spokespersons to ensure representation of USMS that responds to standard media behavior and expectations, and that makes the most of every opportunity found and presented.
3. LMSC, individual team coordination
With a solid foundation in place, and the "train picking up steam" with national efforts, the focus more than ever should be on coordinating local efforts to coattail on national efforts in order to achieve greater cumulative results.

AGENDA

Saturday, September 13th, 8:00-9:30 am
Meeting Room – PACIFIC FOUR & FIVE

1. Continuation of the PR program
2. Marketing potential for the web site
3. New collateral
4. Ways to better engage members of the committee.

PUBLICATIONS

Committee Chair: Meg Smath

Vice Chair: Steve Peterson

Committee members: Eddie Ames, Debbie Cavanaugh, Marilyn Fink, Cheryl Gettelfinger, Tracy Grilli, Lil Haneman, Joanne Tingley, Mary Lee Watson. Executive Committee Liaison – Scott Rabalais.

ANNUAL REPORT

When our committee was called the Rule Book Committee, its sole responsibility was producing each year's rule book. Since our name was changed to Publications Committee, we have slowly begun expanding our focus.

1. Our first, and still primary, project was getting the 2003 rule book compiled and published. Tracy Grilli compiled Appendix E, Cheryl Gettelfinger coordinated the ads, and all other committee members proofread different segments of the rule book. In addition, Walt Reid provided the pool records, Peter Crumbine and

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Jill Wright provided the long distance records, Kathy Casey proofread the rules sections, Barry Fasbender proofread the championship sections, Rob Copeland proofread the legislation sections, and Peter Crumbine proofread the long distance sections.

2. A notice was published in SWIM magazine calling for submissions for the cover contest. So far we have received two entries.
3. Meg began a project to make the style of the LMSC Handbook consistent throughout it. She has finished going through the handbook and is in the process of entering the changes into the computer files.
4. At the same time she compared the handbook with the rule book. She found several minor inconsistencies, which can be remedied by making corrections to the handbook. One contradiction, though, was better handled by making a change to the rule book. The handbook said that appendix b of the rule book listed all the organizations that USMS approves for certifying officials. Actually, the rule book lists only some of the organizations. Meg consulted Rob Copeland (Legislation), Leo Letendre (Rules), and David Diehl (Officials), and all agreed that Appendix B should be amended as follows: "USMS approves USA Swimming, USMS (through its LMSCs), YMCA, Federation of High School Swimming Officials, College Swimming Officials Association (NCAA), and San Diego-Imperial LMSC, ~~and other approved bodies~~ as organizations for certifying officials ~~bodies~~. This proposed language was submitted to the Executive Committee since they have jurisdiction over Appendix B.
5. The committee members are going through the rule book, looking for possible housekeeping proposals. Any found will be submitted to the appropriate committees for consideration.

AGENDA

Thursday, September 11th, 2:45-4:15 pm
Meeting Room - ESQUIRE

1. Choose cover for 2004 rule book.
2. Choose dedication for 2004 rule book.
3. Discuss housekeeping proposals.
4. Make assignments for 2004 rule book.

REGISTRATION

Committee Chair: Anna Lea Roof

Vice Chair – George Simon

Committee members: Jack Buchannan, Jim Coleman, Julie Heather, Kathy Keffer-Sharpe, Jim Lewis, Arnie Litt, John Pilger, Joan Smith. Ex-officio: Tracy Grilli, Esther Lyman.
Executive Committee Liaison – Nancy Ridout.

ANNUAL REPORT

The USMS registrars accomplished a daunting task during 2002-2003: they became completely computerized! All fifty-three registrars deserve a huge round of applause for their efforts.

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USMS CONVERSION TO LEOWARE

At the 2002 USMS Convention, a new “permanent swimmer ID” was adopted. The use of a computer is required to assign and re-register swimmers with this permanent ID. It was decided that the 2003 registration year would be a transition year, during which the LMSCs not using computers would have the chance to get comfortable with the USMS registration software (affectionately known as “Leoware”).

At the start of the 2003 registration year (in November, 2002), there were eleven LMSCs that were not using Leoware. I'm pleased to say that as of today (June, 2003), all of those LMSCs have successfully converted!

This is a TREMENDOUS achievement, especially considering it was accomplished in such a short time. The LMSC registrars are to be congratulated for their cooperation and perseverance in learning the new system.

Leo Letendre, Tracy Grilli, and Esther Lyman were instrumental in helping these LMSCs get computerized. Leo spent many hours assisting individual registrars with various installation and printing problems. Thank you, Leo!

ONLINE REGISTRATION FORMS

In March, 2003, I discovered that we had eleven LMSCs that did not have an electronic version of their USMS registration form on the Internet. I sent an e-mail to those LMSCs, offering to post their forms on the USMS web site. Those that had designed their forms on a computer sent me an electronic copy. Those who only had hard copies of forms mailed one to me and I re-created their forms in Word. As of June, 2003, 52 LMSC registration forms are posted on the USMS web site.

AGENDA

Thursday, September 11th, 10:15-11:45 am
Meeting Room - STRATFORD

1. **Privacy of our members' data:** The registrars frequently get requests from meet directors and others for member lists.
2. **The renewal process using the Permanent Swimmer ID:** Some of the members of the Registration Committee may be used as “beta testers” on the next release of Leoware before it goes out to all of the Registrars.
3. **The variable portion of the USMS registration number:** Is it necessary?
4. Redesign of sample registration forms that appear in the LMSC Handbook