

Message from the LMSC Chair “My two cents”

I am coming to the end of my two-year term on the board, and I want to review our progress, report on the current state of affairs within our LMSC (most of Virginia and a few counties in West Virginia), and share some important information about the future of our organization.

When I agreed to serve two years ago, I admittedly stepped into the role with no pressing agenda. I reported that in terms of the vital administrative and financial organization of our LMSC, our house was in very good order, that there was nothing major that needed “fixing”, and that remains true today. We’ve been fortunate to have had good continuity with a core group of committed officers who have put in countless hours over the years. As my term comes to a close, I especially want to thank my fellow officers who have served with me: **Denise Letendre** (Vice Chair), **Charlie Cockrell** (Treasurer, as well as Official Chair), and **Alice Phillips** (Secretary). Each of these individuals has been responsive and competent in their duties, and they are putting in many hours each week, above and beyond their full-time jobs.

Heather Stevenson has served as Sanctions Chair for several years, a true balancing act as she has been a liaison between our national office and local meet directors. She has been professional and thorough, and has earned her retirement from this position. She is stepping down and I am seeking someone to step up. **Jim and Patty Miller** are the voices of experience and reason, and although they have larger responsibilities at the national level, they stay involved locally, both doing work behind-the-scenes on our board, and as volunteers at meets and at Chris Greene Lake. Finally, I want to recognize **Shirley Loftus-Charley** (Registrar), **Chris Stevenson** (Webmaster, Top 10 Recorder), and **Betsy Durrant** (newsletter editor). I don’t know for sure, but I suspect

that these 3 individuals do 12+ hours of work for us on a weekly basis, and the bulk of it requires daily diligence.

Our Board of Directors is experienced and capable, but we are tired, over-worked, and in desperate need of some new faces!!! **We have 1224 members in this LMSC, and yet only 10-12 people are serving actively on the Board.** With the exception of Denise, all of us are over the age of 40. We have good male/female equity, but we certainly could benefit from some diversity in terms of age, race (we have no minorities serving), and geography. Most of us are members of VMST, so we'd really like to get some representation from newer clubs. In my final five weeks as Chair, I'm going to put my energy into recruiting some of you to consider running for office, joining the Board as a Chair, or simply getting involved at our next annual meeting...

Our next annual meeting is Sunday, Nov. 6, at 7pm, at the home of Jim and Patty Miller (13441 Stonegate Road, Midlothian, Va. 23113). Every member of our LMSC is invited to attend and encouraged to participate. If you cannot attend in person, you have the option of calling in to join the teleconference (that phone number will be posted on the website as the date approaches).

Our committee recently had a lively discussion (via email) about how we spend *your* money, and the process we consider when expenses or opportunities arise. Each of you has paid dues to join USMS, and some of those fees come to the LMSC. I encourage you to go to our website (www.vaswim.org) and check the financials for yourself- if you are not happy about how we are spending your money, then I encourage you to reach out to me in the next five weeks, or better yet, join us for the annual meeting on Nov. 6. This is your LMSC, so I encourage you to get involved.

When I wrote to you two years ago, I had two broad goals for us, so I'd like to address how we've done:

1. Increase membership by 5%

In 2014, we had 1150 members in our LMSC, in 2015 we inched up to 1159, and last week Shirley reported that we're at 1224 thus far this year (with a month and a half remaining to register). We're up 6% compared to 2014! I wish I could tell you that this jump is attributable to some action or new program we initiated as a Board, but most likely it's the result of the quadrennial Olympic boost (thank you Michael Phelps), and the addition of 10 new teams (Club Tribe in Williamsburg has 40 members, and there are 3 new teams in Tidewater alone). Peluso Masters in Richmond gets some credit, too, as their numbers continue to grow (200 swimmers, up 17 from last year).

2. Increase the opportunities for competition by improving our current meets and adding some new ones.

We continue to host several pool meets, as well as two open water events, and they are fairly well attended, but sadly, we have not made significant progress on adding new ones.

To add new meets or open water events, we need some manpower, or femalepower (!), pure and simple. Have you ever thought about giving back to our sport? What is stopping you?

Well, the research shows that most people will volunteer if they can find a job that matches their skills and interests. Chris Stevenson, Shirley Loftus-Charley, and I are responsible for nominating candidates for the four elected offices, which are Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary, and Treasurer. The Chair position is definitely vacant, as I am stepping down. The others will most likely have people running for re-election, but regardless, we'd love to have a slate of multiple candidates for each office. If you'd like to run, please contact me at vachair@usms.org

I am also responsible for appointing a new Sanctions Chair (Heather is stepping down), as well as an Open Water/Long Distance Chair (I am stepping down), and a Coaches Chair (vacant). Again, contact me if an interest strikes you.

A full description of all the roles on our Board can be found here:
<http://www.usms.org/admin/lmschb/content/jobdesc>

Finally, I am also accepting nominations for the **Stevenson Service Award**. This award was initiated last year, and will be awarded annually to two outstanding volunteers from the Virginia LMSC. It is named in honor of Chris and Heather Stevenson. If you are a member of the Virginia LMSC, you may nominate one or two people by sending an email to me at vachair@usms.org and include your name, the name(s) of the LMSC members you are nominating, and a rationale for why that member is deserving. The idea is to honor two people who have gone above and beyond for our members in the past year. Nominations will be reviewed and voted upon at the annual fall meeting on November 6, 2016, and presented at the David Gregg III Memorial meet in February 2017. Winners receive a plaque.

It's been my pleasure serving you as Chair these past two years, and I hope that you'll reach out to me if you have ideas to improve the way we serve your needs.

As Chair, I tend to receive a lot of emails that end with "that's my two cents", so I'll end with that thought. If you haven't given your two cents, please check your pockets and give... **change is good!**

That's my \$.02...

Dave Holland
Chair