

2017 Virginia Local Masters Swim Committee (LMSC)

Chair Report

As I near the end of my first year as the Virginia LMSC Chair, I want to take this opportunity to share with our membership some of the activities we have been engaged in during 2017. This report is certainly not all-encompassing—please take time to go to the business section of our [website](#) and read the reports from our various committees and review meeting minutes from some of our conference calls throughout the year.

Although I have been involved in Masters Swimming for over 25 years, and volunteered for various clubs and LMSCs, I had not held an official position at the LMSC level prior to this year. I was truly honored to be nominated and selected to lead this organization. After my first year, I honestly have a new appreciation for this position and fully recognize that the LMSCs are the heartbeat of Masters Swimming at the local level.

When starting off, I did not fully grasp the level of involvement that is desired in the Chair position. I use the word desired because, as a volunteer organization, the level of involvement that is required is subjective. Like most any endeavor, you are only as effective as the time and effort you exert. I receive emails on nearly a daily basis from our members, fellow Board members, the USMS National Office, other swimming related stakeholders, and even the general public. I have done my best to either address each one or forward to the appropriate individual within our organization.

I had no specific goals for my first year as Chair. I was simply trying get my footing by figuring out what my role and responsibilities involved. I tackled issues as they arose, learning and growing with each circumstance and challenge. Along the way, I was trying to leverage my experience of serving on other volunteer Boards to evaluate where we were as an organization and trying to recommend ways forward to strengthen our organization.

In this report, I just want to highlight some of the major issues and achievements we have tackled this year. I am always available to explain any issue in further detail upon request.

As highlights, in 2017, the Virginia LMSC:

- Transitioned our financial oversight and accounts to a new Treasurer
- Appointed a new Fitness Chair and a new Coaches Chair
- Activated a Finance Committee and a Fitness Committee
- Established an Ad Hoc Committee to review and revise the Virginia LMSC By-Laws
- Established a temporary Championship Committee to assist SwimRVA in hosting the 2020 USMS Summer Nationals in Richmond
- Assisted SwimRVA in its bid submission to host the 2019 & 2020 USMS Summer Nationals at the Collegiate School Aquatics Center (CSAC)

- Participated in the USMS National Office's LMSC Standards Survey. While we have some improvements still to be made, Virginia is meeting and exceeding most standards, and in my opinion, is one of the strongest LMSCs in the country
- Submitted our Communications Team for the USMS June Krauser Communications Award
- Submitted a protest to USMS on behalf of four of our swimmers who combined to break 4 existing USMS relay records in one meet, but were later told the times were disallowed because the USMS Rules Committee determined improper timing systems were selected by meet officials. Our protest was denied.
- Submitted 2 Requests for Legislation/Rules Changes
 - Records and Top 10 Times – Defeated; but USMS did clarify the rules regarding primary and secondary timing systems to conform with USA Swimming and FINA rules regarding how they relate to world and national records
 - Changing LMSC Affiliation – Defeated; however, through our submission, the Legislation Committee realized the wording of the rule was inadequate and took action to revise in the upcoming year
- Explored adding some new Pool Events
 - VA LMSC worked with TIDE Swimming as they hosted the 1st Annual Long Course Masters Meet at the Princess Anne YMCA's new pool in Virginia Beach
 - Working with organizers on a potential meet at Randolph Macon College in 2018
- We increased the involvement of volunteers for LMSC activities
- Participated in several USMS-led Peer-to-Peer conference calls

In addition to the above, as Chair, I attended a USMS LMSC Leadership Summit in March and the US Aquatic Sports Annual Convention in September. I found these conferences very valuable and well worth the investment to attend. Following each of these, I gained strategic information, ideas from fellow LMSCs, and produced actions items for our organization. Additionally, I reported out on these conferences through articles I wrote for the website and newsletter, and I further briefed the Board of Directors through email and conference calls.

I would like to specifically highlight one of the first issues I faced as Chair, because it resulted in us learning an important lesson that can benefit the LMSC. At the beginning of the year, the Treasurer that the Board had elected, decided to not pursue the position. Our previous Treasurer, Charlie Cockrell had held the position for more than eight years and he was ready to move on to another volunteer position. We were left scrambling to fill this vital role in our organization. While Charlie had done an exemplary job over the years, I was told he stayed in that role because there were no volunteers stepping forward. In fact, I was led to believe that our organization, in general, lacked volunteers. We sent out a strategic message to our membership, explaining the need for a volunteer treasurer. The response was astounding! People came out of the woodwork to step forward and offer their services. Some had financial experience, while others simply stated they wished to help out in whatever way they could. From this challenging issue, we not only selected a fantastic new Treasurer, but we were able to form a Finance Committee of other volunteers, and we were able to fill two other vacant positions on the Board!

The lesson here is that there are plenty of people out there who are willing to volunteer—we just need to find them. With that said, that is one of my key goals for our organization for 2018. The following list are other goals that, as Chair, I would like to see achieved in the upcoming year.

VA LMSC Goals for 2018 (in no particular order):

- Increase the number of volunteers for LMSC activities & events
- Establish Quarterly BOD Conference Calls
- Improve our Strategic Messaging through emails, our website, our Facebook page, and other communications vehicles
- Form a committee to recommend how to implement the USMS Strategic Plan in VA
- Examine ways to keep non-traditional competitive swimmers engaged in USMS
- Grow our Clubs: We currently have about 360 members that are Unattached; we need to encourage them to join a team. By building camaraderie and having fun with teammates, I believe this will keep those members more engaged.
- Increase involvement of coaches into the Virginia LMSC – they are our primary contact with the majority of our members
- Explore offering clinics around the state, such as stroke, technique, coaches certification, ALTS, health & nutrition, etc.
- Consider creating a contest to design a logo for Virginia Masters Swimming

In closing, I would just like to thank my fellow Board members. Most of them have served many years on the Board in various capacities, to include my current position as Chair. In addition, many of our Board members also currently hold key positions with USMS or serve on national committees. I have tried to leverage that experience by reaching out for advice on numerous occasions. Thanks to all of you that have been so gracious to offer advice, yet leave me space to lead as I see fit. I plan to continue to reach out for further advice as I dive into my second year.

I did not intend to be so long-winded, but this is what happens when you give a former journalist a chance to write about something that he is passionate about. And after a year in this position, I have become even more impassioned. I love Masters Swimming; I want to preserve the intent of why the organization was founded, while exploring opportunities to make it even better. Please send me any comments about our organization, or suggestions you may have on how we can make Masters Swimming better for all of Virginia! I am always available by email at kirkclear@usms.org.

Thank you!

Kirk Clear
Chair, Virginia LMSC

