

**2013 Virginia Local Masters Swim Committee (LMSC) Annual Meeting
Chair's Report**

One of the biggest challenges faced by USMS nationally and the Virginia LMSC in 2013 was an unexpected increase in liability insurance premiums, primarily attributable to open water events. Based on requests from its new insurer, USMS assessed an insurance surcharge on sanctioned open water events and implemented new safety requirements. Luckily for the Virginia LMSC, our two longstanding open water events – Chris Greene Lake and Jack King – were able to comply with the safety requirements and Virginia Masters Swim Team stepped in to fund the insurance surcharge for those events. And, even in the face of these challenges, the LMSC was able to welcome a new open water event at Lake Moomaw.

Opportunities

We are in a time of change for the Virginia LMSC. In the past, swimmers in the LMSC primarily registered with one club – Virginia Masters Swim Team. While VMST continues to be the largest club in our LMSC – and a perennial contender for top team at USMS National Championships – new USMS registered clubs have sprung up throughout Virginia. I see this as a good thing, signifying more opportunities for adult fitness and camaraderie through local coached swimming programs.

According to the report prepared by our Treasurer, Charlie Cockrell, we may have something in 2013 that the LMSC has not seen for a few years – a budget surplus. This is attributable to an increase in LMSC member dues and a savings in newsletter costs driven primarily by members opting to receive their newsletters electronically. Granted, it is not a large budget surplus, but it's enough to give us hope that we can again focus on expenditures to provide better services to our members. I would like us to focus those services on coach development and events.

The expansion of services for our swimmers starts on the pool deck. It is the coach who sees swimmers on a regular basis and most directly provides them with the opportunity for fitness, skill development, and fun. To the extent the LMSC can use its funds to provide education and support for coaches, it will benefit all of our members.

In addition, events – swim meets, open water competition, fitness events – give our members focus and challenge. In addition to our longstanding sanctioned swim meets in Virginia Beach and Richmond, we have added new meets in Lexington and Northern Virginia in recent years. Also, VMST hosted the first USMS Colonies Zone Championship ever held in our LMSC. Our LMSC leadership needs to position existing and potential new meets for success. This includes coordinating the calendar so that swimmers are not conflicted about what to attend, providing training for event directors, and finding new event directors and venues. Event directors should have the support of our LMSC and should be connected to the goals and standards that the LMSC expects in exchange for a sanction.

Volunteers

While I was accepting the USMS Capt. Ransom J. Arthur Award this year, I acknowledged the strong history of volunteerism and leadership provided by the Virginia LMSC. We need to continue this tradition. Whether it's Heather and Chris Stevenson directing the Colonies Zone Championship, Ginger Cychaniewicz and Sunfish Masters creating new swim meets, Dave Holland helping a new open water event get established, Charlie Cockrell keeping our financial house in order, or our Board showing up for an annual meeting on a Sunday afternoon, the Virginia LMSC has great volunteers. Our challenge is to constantly develop new volunteers and advance existing volunteers into leadership roles.

We will have elections of LMSC officers a year from now. I encourage everyone to consider whether they can serve in an LMSC office – Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary, Treasurer – or whether they know of a good candidate to do so.

Aside from official positions, I encourage everyone to think of the things they and their fellow swimmers can do to help our LMSC and its clubs provide more opportunities for health, wellness, fitness and competition for adults through swimming. These volunteer chances can be large or small. Gather a group for breakfast after Saturday practice. Help the coach create a mailing list for group emails. Organize a swim clinic. Write an article or send some photos for the LMSC newsletter. Do whatever you can to capture your enthusiasm for Masters swimming and pay it forward by volunteering.

As a reminder, we have two exciting competitive events that will take place relatively close to home next year. The 15th FINA World Masters Championships will be held in Montreal, Canada July 27 – August 10, 2014 (swimming events will be August 3-10). The Marriott U.S. Masters Swimming Summer National Championship will take place in College Park, Maryland August 13-17, 2014.

2014 promises to be a year of opportunity for bringing the mission of USMS to more adults in Virginia and West Virginia while we each enjoy the benefits of Masters swimming – fitness, wellness, challenge, and fun.