

General Chair's Report—May, 2006

As my third year as your General Chair of MSI comes to a close and as I enter my last year as your General Chair, I have reflect back on the past and look toward the future for MSI.

What has struck me the most these past three and a half years is the passion and dedication your MSI board brings to their positions on your board. Many of the members are full time coaches while the other members are either full time business people or full time students. Their hard work over the past three years have made my job an easier one and I would publicly like to thank all the current and past board members during my tenure for their hard work and high ethical standards they have brought to the board and MSI. A lot has been accomplished and there is more to accomplish in the year and years ahead.

This past year saw some major accomplishments and some disappointments.

On the accomplishment front, MSI has returned to solid financial footing and I see no need for MSI to raise either dues or meet fees in the foreseeable future. We have been frugal with our monies but not at the price of hurting any of our programs or clubs.

You will see a nominal increase in your dues in the years ahead but that is part of the ten year plan to gradually raise fees by USA Swimming and 100% of that increase goes to USA Swimming NOT MSI. My promise to you three years ago to work hard to make the MSI experience affordable continues to be honored.

We have an all time record number of both athlete and non-athlete members. LSCs can always count on an “Olympic bounce” in membership the year the Summer Games are held but it has now been almost two years since the last Games and our membership ranks continue to grow. This is a real tribute to our coaches and our many dedicated volunteers on the various clubs!! Thank you for all your hard work!!

Another accomplishment is really a continuation of my efforts since becoming GC; our relationship and cooperation with USA Swimming and the MSHSL are strong. Special thanks to Randy Julian, Central Zone Program Director for his many trips to Minnesota to visit with clubs and swimmers.

In 2005, Randy made six separate trips to Minnesota at USA Swimming expense and is in constant contact with me and the MSI board to see how he can continue to assist clubs and swimmers in growing their programs.

While on the topic of relationship and cooperation, I am also very gratified with our relationship with the University of Minnesota Aquatic Center. This relationship has always been good but over the past two years, Duane Proell and his staff along with Coaches Dennis Dale, Kelly Kremer, and Terry Nieszner have really stepped up our partnership and cooperation. Our thanks to the U for all they do for MSI!!! The U is a real asset to MSI and its many members!!

A major disappointment for me this past year was our losing the bid for the Olympic Trials to Omaha in the Spring of 2005. Duane Proell, the University of Minnesota, and as importantly, the Minnesota Sports and Entertainment Corporation (owners of the Wild, Storm, and Xcel Center) put together an incredible bid. There is no doubt in my mind that USA Swimming made the wrong decision but our failure to win the bid was not due to lack of effort on the part of all Minnesota parties concerned. I would like to thank Duane, Bob Naegle, Jack Larson, and all the other individuals, cities, and corporations that worked so hard to put together this bid!!

Another disappointment to me this year was the increasing number of complaints that were filed with our Board of Review. This increase is consistent with the percentage increase being seen at the

National Board of Review level. I do not know what to attribute this trend to other than to say with increasing membership and more clubs being created, it may come with the territory. In my final year, I will continue to work, as I have the past three years, toward a positive resolution to disputes/complaints so they do not need to escalate to the BOR.

The last disappointment is that we have not made any progress in solving the “lack of pools and pool time” for the state and MSI. No matter how much we try, we are simply running out of pools and this is a problem that many LSCs face. Ours seems more acute because of the shortened summer season (due to weather) and thus the lack of meter pools. Compounding the problem is our harsh winters and the cost of not only building an indoor competitive pool but the high cost of yearly maintenance. USA Swimming has created a special department to address this issue and I trust that we can take advantage of their knowledge and expertise.

In closing, I thank you for this opportunity to be your GC for MSI. I continue to be open for any and all ideas that will make MSI a better organization focused on advancing amateur swimming in the state and the country. I apologize o you in advance for any mistakes you feel that I may have made and promise to continue to work for your trust. Let us not forget that this organization is here for the kids and only the kids to assist in enriching their lives physically and mentally. While I do feel MSI has some areas that need addressing, I feel very good that we are delivering, with the assistance of USA Swimming a quality product.

Respectfully Submitted,

**David R. Braun
General Chair
USA Swimming**