



MINNESOTA  
SWIMMING

## GENERAL CHAIR REPORT 2014 HOUSE of DELEGATES

I stepped into the role of General Chair beginning with the Board meeting on 5/21/13.

But to a large extent, I judge my past year of service from 5/5/13 when 12 volunteers and the MSI staff spent over 8 hours on a Sunday reviewing and updating the MSI Strategic Plan. I strongly encourage all members of MSI to take a few minutes and review that plan and the various related materials. They are available at [mns swim.org](http://mns swim.org).

For anybody who might question or even disagree with directions taken by MSI, a good starting point is that Strategic Plan. There are many things like swimmer registrations or club charters or meet sanctions that are largely regulated by USA-Swimming. But there are a variety of other activities undertaken by MSI staff as well as numerous volunteers that are driven by that Strategic Plan. Take a look to get an idea of how time and resources are being spent.

In the 11 months since becoming General Chair, I have enjoyed watching numerous developments that I think reflect an incredibly dynamic and successful organization. Perhaps it starts with just the sheer size of our membership. During 2013, the MSI membership blew past the 10,000 registered athletes for the first time ever! The MSI growth trend is one of the strongest in the entire country. Lots and lots of kids want to be part of competitive swimming.

During the summer of 2013, Team Minnesota crushed the competition at the Age Group Zone Championships in Topeka Kansas. The size and energy of that zone team was arguably the best it has ever been. In 2012-13, MSI had 40 athletes recognized as Speedo Academic All-Americans.

In the fall of 2013, an unprecedented number of MSI volunteers were appointed to serve on a wide variety of USA-Swimming national committees. I haven't investigated closely enough, but my suspicion is that there may be only a couple other LSCs in country that are as well-recognized as MSI. One of the hidden benefits is that MSI is able to help drive some of the discussions and decisions that are then being made by our national governing body.

The number of meets and competitive races continues to explode. Take a look at the reports from Sheryl McGuire and Michael Bougie. We are continually adding more meets; and those additional meets are adding more races that need to be entered into the database.

I feel really good about the quality of our meets. I'm biased (as an MSI official) but I believe the professional caliber of meet administration and officiating in MSI is among the best in the country. I believe our host clubs and our volunteer officials work incredibly hard to give the athletes the best meets that are possible.

I am particularly impressed with the evolution of the Minnesota Regional Championships (MRCs). These meets have become fast and intensely competitive. "Back in the day", these late-season meets were often described as kind of glorified time trials. Not any more. The MRC Championship has become a true season-ending achievement.

I am also greatly hopeful that we may see further pool development in the foreseeable future to serve our ever-growing numbers. I participated in a number of exploratory discussions. Our Executive Director, Bob Crunstedt, participated in many more. One that we know is happening is the Rochester Rec Center. If it proceeds according to plan, we hope to see that indoor long course facility improved with, among other things, a separate warm-up/cool-down well that will allow that facility to host long course championship meets. Some of those championship conversations are already occurring.

The MSI relationship with other swimming organizations remains a focus. We have a number of great friends at the colleges and universities across Minnesota. I think we'll see a deepening of some of those relationships in the future.

And the profile of our athletes continues to evolve. Great efforts have been made to open up our sport to a greater diversity of families. And we have seen phenomenal achievements by some of our athletes with disabilities.

I enjoy doing this. I sometimes wonder what this organization will look like in 30 years – it's certainly far different from what it was when I was a Minnesota age grouper. I want to remind everyone that we are all in this for the love of swimming and in the interests of our kids. We may sometimes disagree on some "small" points but on the big stuff I really believe we all are moving in the same direction.

I look forward to a fantastic 2014-15.

Jim Hanton