



**MINNESOTA
SWIMMING**

GENERAL CHAIR REPORT 2014 HOUSE of DELEGATES

The 2015 HOD marks the end of my first term as General Chair (“time flies when you’re having fun...”)
It has been and continues to be fun. I hope I’ll get the chance to spend a couple more years working with this great organization.

First and foremost, the people are fabulous. The staff are amazing. I know for a fact that staff are working on and attending to LSC needs all days of the week and literally all hours of the day. They have multi-tasked and adapted to various challenges and changes that arose throughout the year. They have worked to evolve just as the organization itself has evolved over the years. And they know there is more change coming. The Board and the countless volunteers are equally stupendous. One of the things that I have felt is so valuable is the “range” reflected by our volunteers – we have everything from teenagers first venturing into volunteer service to veterans who have spent literally decades serving this sport and this community. Here again, challenges and changes occurred throughout the year. I want to particularly thank Lloyd and Olga for stepping up to fill board seats vacated when several of our longtime leaders moved out of state. It was never necessary to twist arms – they just said “what is needed?”

I’m not going to try and mention all the things that I believe belong on our highlight reel. Some items that immediately pop to mind:

The MNswim initiative is one that I have enjoyed greatly and of which I am very proud. Minnesota Swimming IS a great story and I believe MNswim has helped to share and cement that story. It has taken only a few examples from our membership and allowed all of us to feel good about sharing in that membership. MNswim has received national attention and rightfully so.

Our TeamMinnesota efforts have been superb. My sincere thanks and congratulations to the coaching staffs who have received rave reviews. But I’m also throwing down the gauntlet – can we field a team of 300 for the summer zone meet to be held at the U? I hope so.

I have been impressed by the athlete leadership of the past year. Patrick and Lauren and Jack have gotten more athletes engaged in our sport’s governance than I can ever remember. The current discussions regarding Open Water competition was largely spearheaded by the athletes. Way to go.

I am very much looking forward to the renovated Rochester Aquatic Center. I firmly believe that this project will lead to expanded and improved championship programming in Minnesota going forward. We need such championship LC facilities and this is a great first step.

There are also challenges on the horizon. MSI has, for the first time, undertaken a multi-year budgeting process. Led by Terry Peterson, we can see some projections that show us that our financial strengths (and they are strengths) will need to be targeted and used even more carefully over the next several years. We can and must continue to invest in the needs of our membership but it may become even more important to pick and choose among a variety of important needs.

The upcoming 2015-16 meet schedule is going to be an interesting challenge. It is certainly different from the schedule of years ago. It is critical that all the clubs work together to make this successful for all athletes. I have had some comments to the effect that “why is MSI doing this...” in part, my response is that we are all MSI – so is the question better stated as “why are we doing this to ourselves...” I think it has potential to be a good thing. But again that depends to a large extent on how well all the clubs work with each other.

Membership is always a concern. Historically, there was always the phenomenon of the post-Olympic “bump”. But then after the bump there would be a gradual attrition. From 2008 through 2014, MSI was incredibly fortunate to see surprisingly small attrition. Our numbers seemed to just go up and up. The past few months we seem to have seen some of that old attrition. So we are watching carefully to springboard off of the 2016 Olympic year. We will probably work even harder to spread and market MNswim. We want those numbers back.

Thank you for the opportunity to be part of all this.

Jim Hanton