

**May 2007 House of Delegates**  
**Opening Remarks**  
**Jeffrey L. Gray, General Chair**

Welcome to Connecticut Swimming's spring 2007 House of Delegates meeting. Each spring and fall our swimming community comes together twice to address matters of importance to our LSC. Today's agenda offers everyone the opportunity for updates on several matters of interest.

Before proceeding any further with my prepared remarks, please let me take this opportunity to recognize and welcome a couple of important individuals who have joined us for tonight's House of Delegates meeting:

Our former General Chair, Steve Carroll, is with us tonight, and we welcome Steve back. We have managed to persuade Steve to come out of "swimming retirement", for what we hope will be a brief encore on an important front. I'll have more to say about Steve's assignment a bit later. Welcome Steve.

We also have with us Peter Clark, the USA Swimming Sports Consultant for the Eastern Zone. Peter is the point person between USA Swimming and the clubs, and he is in Connecticut running a USA Swimming Club Business Seminar at CAMEL. He agreed to join us tonight and later in the meeting, will introduce himself more formally, and respond to any questions that anyone would like to ask him. Welcome Peter, we're happy to have you with us.

Let me begin my remarks by confirming for you, our membership, that Connecticut Swimming is a strong organization, comprised of dedicated and competent volunteers. We are a non-profit organization with annual revenues and expenses in excess of \$600,000, and we are well managed, fiscally sound, and forward thinking. The strength of our organization can be found in our volunteer base, and our effectiveness over the course of this past year and in the future will remain contingent upon the willingness of our many volunteers to pool their collective knowledge, skills and abilities, and work together to achieve our common mission: **advancing the sport of swimming in the state of Connecticut on behalf of our athletes.** I would like to take this opportunity on your behalf to express my appreciation and thanks to all of those who have contributed and will continue to contribute their time and energy to make Connecticut Swimming the outstanding organization that it is.

At this time, I would ask all members of the Board of Directors and any volunteers from their committees to stand and be recognized. Please join me

in giving these volunteers and committee members a round of applause. I would also like to make special mention of our outgoing Board members. Our senior athlete representative from the Wilton Y, Haley Smith, and our senior coach representative from SNCO, Christine Pelham, have both served two year terms on the board, and have represented their constituents during their time with effectiveness, grace and good humor. Haley continues to serve as the Eastern Zone Rep to USA Swimming. Please join me in thanking them for their time and effort on behalf of Connecticut Swimming.

Finally, I would like to formally introduce the new incoming members of the Board who will begin their terms tomorrow, and ask them to stand so you can see who they are. First, our new junior athlete representative, Dana Gnerre, from the Wilton Y, and next our junior coach representative, Michael Ferraro, from the Trumbull Pisces.

As we headed into the 2006-2007 board cycle, I asked the members of the Board to consider the following basic assumptions and management principles:

1.) Everyone within our organization is likely to be a generalist and a novice, with certain insights into different matters. No one should assume that any one person will have all of the answers that our membership may be looking for at any given time; in many cases, if not most, there will be many people around any given table who may have knowledgeable and insight on the issues at hand; collective views are helpful, and should be sought, and asking questions is the best way to collect the necessary information.

2.) Delegation and distribution of workload is important.

3.) Issues and concerns should be brought forward constructively, and should be accompanied by proposed solutions whenever possible, or least a willingness on the part of the individual to become involved in the process of addressing the issue; no one individual within the organization can manage all of the work and respond to all the issues that concern our membership.

4.) In an organization of this nature, expansion of the volunteer base is important; related to this, the active engagement of the committees charged with carrying out the work of the organization is crucial; to this point, I asked our board members to consider some fundamental questions:

- how many volunteer members do we have on our committees?
- what is the optimal size of each committee?

- how do we solicit volunteers for active participation on our committees?
- have our committees maintained proper membership balance relative to coach/non-coach, geographic and YMCA/non-YMCA participants?
- how active have the committees themselves been?
- have the committees published agendas in advance, observed commonly accepted voting practices and posted minutes of their deliberations?
- is our committee structure proactive and effective in soliciting input and feedback from our membership on issues of concern?
- do we have an experienced volunteer base that lends itself to succession planning in the future, at both the committee and board level?

As we moved into the year, we sought volunteers for our various committees, reviewed and approved each committee, and charged them with their responsibilities for the year. You will hear reports and updates from many of our division heads and committee chairs this evening, concerning the work of their respective units during the course of the year. I encourage all of you within the audience this evening to consider volunteering your time through involvement in Connecticut Swimming, in order to make it an even stronger organization in the future.

The final issue that I will comment on is one that many of you are likely aware of, and concerns the recent communications that have been exchanged between Connecticut Swimming and the Connecticut Interscholastic Athletic Conference regarding the issue of athletic participation, and the associated jurisdictional matters. For those unfamiliar with this issue, information is available at this meeting and can also be found on our website. By way of updates, the Executive Director of CIAC has responded to our concerns with an invitation to meet for the purpose of discussing issues of mutual concern. Connecticut Swimming will accept this invitation, and we have assembled a small committee that will be charged with organizing the presentation of our concerns and developing a strategy for advancing them. The members of our organization who have volunteered to serve on this committee are all familiar names:

Ed Doernberger  
Rick Lewis  
Ellen Johnston  
Henk Jansen  
Dave Heller  
Mike Huffman, and

Steve Carroll, who has graciously accepted our invitation to chair this committee.

We will be having our first organizational immediately following this evening's House of Delegates meeting. Any members with questions or concerns are encouraged to reach out to any member of this committee. We will keep the membership of Connecticut Swimming updated on our conversations on this front as we proceed.

As always, it has been an active year for our organization, which you will hear more about from the various members of the Board who will be updating you this evening. It has been my pleasure to serve you as the General Chairman of the Board of Directors for Connecticut Swimming. This concludes my remarks, and we will now move to the reports from the Board officers.

Jeffrey L. Gray  
General Chair  
Connecticut Swimming, Inc.  
May 21, 2007