

House of Delegates Spring 2008 Meeting Opening Remarks

Welcome to Connecticut Swimming's spring 2008 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.

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 \$650,000, 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. I would like to make special mention of two outgoing Board members, our senior athlete representative Dan Zeek, and our Financial Vice Chair Jeff Scobee. Both of these gentlemen have served Connecticut Swimming well over the past two years, and I appreciate their hard work and dedication. Please join me in giving these volunteers and committee members a round of applause. Finally, I would also like to make special mention of the new members of the Board who have either recently begun or will begin soon their terms of service, and formally introduce them to you so you can see who they are:

- our new junior athlete representative, Lauren Solernou, from the Chesire Y; and
- our junior coach representative, Dennis Flores, from the Norwalk Zeus Swim Club;
- I'm hearing some rumors in the grapevine that at least one of our long serving volunteers may be stepping down from her duties in the coming

year; if that's the case, we will be looking for someone to take over the duties that she has so graciously carried out over many years.

As we conclude the 2007-2008 board cycle and head into 2009-2009, I will continue to emphasize 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 have continued to ask our board members to consider certain 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 conclude the current year and look to the 2008-09, we will continue to seek interested volunteers, with the objective of having full and active volunteer rosters for all of our committees. 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, and ask that you please encourage those you know to do the same. Our committee chairs can be reached by anyone within the membership using the contact information on our website.

A few final announcements before I close my remarks:

- CIAC Update: many of you will recall the exchange we had awhile back with the Connecticut Interscholastic Athletic Conference (CIAC) related to the issue of athletic participation, and the associated jurisdictional matters. For those unfamiliar with this issue, information is available on our website. By way of updates, the Executive Director of CIAC responded to our concerns with an invitation to meet for the purpose of discussing issues of mutual concern. Connecticut Swimming accepted this invitation, and we have assembled a small committee that was 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

Chris Hug

Mike Huffman, and

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

We had our first organizational following the House of Delegates meeting last spring. Over the course of the past year, we have reached out to CIAC several times in order to take them up on their invitation to meet, and it has been a challenge getting them to respond our communications. We continued to pursue this meeting throughout the

short course season, and I am happy to report that we were finally able to get a response. We have a meeting set for the coming summer, during which a small contingent from Connecticut Swimming will meet with several administrators from CIAC. We will continue to keep our membership updated on any progress that is made on this front.

- An important point: we continue to sponsor annual clinics within the state for our coaching, athlete and volunteer community; we also sponsor attendance at the USA Swimming Annual Convention each fall for a delegation from CSI, as well as attendance at select clinics, workshops and competitions outside the state for our coaches, athletes and volunteers; in addition, we award four education grants to members of our coaching community annually; you will hear more about these activities from the various committee chairs when they give their reports;
- State of the Sport: I am proud to announce that we have 12 Olympic Trial qualifiers within Connecticut Swimming this year, and they are....

In summary, the year that is ending has been a very good one for us, and we expect the coming year to be an equally active one for our organization. You will hear more about our past and upcoming activities from the various members of the Board who will be updating you this evening. It continues to be 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 19, 2008