

Swimming - A Life's Passion

Now here is a theme to which we can all relate! We love to swim and we're passionate about it. That's why we're willing to spend time and money to attend this convention. That's why we live a healthy lifestyle. That's why United States Masters Swimming is a GREAT organization!

Our convention time this year will be filled to the brim - as usual. Our committees will evaluate past projects and objectives and, with your input and creativity, create new goals and new programs to enrich Masters swimming. Please attend any committees that interest you and feel free to contribute your ideas. We will be electing a new Zone Chairman (who will also serve on the Executive Committee), welcoming our new Controller and Public Relations/Sponsor Liaison, and discussing compensation for our Webmaster and Magazine Editor. Additionally, the Executive Committee will request your approval of their recommendation for our official publication (see President's Report), we will choose the sights for our 2000 Short Course and Long Course National Championships, and each committee will decide how to best contribute to the implementation of our Strategic Plan. This is a RULES year, so be prepared for some debate on the meanings and the need for additional rules.

Now, for some REALLY GOOD NEWS! All convention delegates are being treated to a night at Epcot. This will take place Wednesday evening and it is free - including transportation. A highlight is the Millenium Light Show at 8:30pm. Buses will leave the hotel around 6pm, but check for the exact time and location when you register. All Wednesday meetings after the Board of Directors have been cancelled and rescheduled. I think an outing to Water World is also a possibility. More about that later.

Next year, we will elect a new slate of officers. I would like to invite any of you that may be even remotely interested in being an officer, or curious to learn more about the responsibilities of our officers, to come to the Executive Committee meeting room from 8-9pm Thursday evening. The entire Executive Committee will be there to answer any questions and to chat about our roles in the organization. We'll even provide some refreshments!

Our breakout groups this year will all cover the same topics and center around our theme Swimming - A Life's Passion. Each of the Executive Committee will facilitate a small group to elicit what it is that caused us to join Masters and continues to arouse our excitement and dedication. What we determine can help us to serve our current members better and focus on effective types of promotional efforts and programs to potential new members. We are growing faster and we are retaining more of our current members, but there is a vast number of potential Masters swimmers who have never even heard of our organization. My goal is to raise the awareness of the Masters swimming program so that anyone, anywhere, who would like to participate can do so.

This has been an exciting year, as you will see from reading the enclosed reports. I am looking forward to seeing you all and meeting our new delegates in October. For me, the convention is truly a time of renewal and inspiration. You all make that happen year after year; it never fails. It is an honor and a privilege to lead this organization. It is also my responsibility to all of you who care very much about USMS to seek and be open to new ideas and to evaluate the paths we will take over the next years. I take this responsibility seriously and I have thoroughly enjoyed serving all of you and this extraordinary organization.

Go USA!

Nancy Ridout, President