

## USMS CONVENTION – Orlando, FL 2004

Committee Name: **Communications** Session # (if more than one meeting): \_\_\_\_\_

Cmte. report #: 22

Minutes recorded by: Meg Smath

Date/time of this meeting: Friday, September 17, 2004 8:30 a.m.

### ACTION ITEMS PROPOSED EXPENDITURES

1. MSA to continue the web developer position for next year at a cost of \$56,000.

### ACTION ITEMS

1. MSA to accept the proposal for a Communications Award.
2. MSA to support the web development plan and Web Management Guidelines.
3. MSA that each zone or LMSC shall be responsible for determining which non-USMS events in its geographical area shall be posted on the USMS website.

Committee Chair: Hugh Moore

Vice Chair(s): Michael Moore

Number of committee members present: 16

Absent: 9

Number of other delegates at this meeting: 23

Committee members present: Hugh Moore, Michael Moore, Tracy Grilli, Ray Novitske, Tom Lyndon, Kelly Crandell, Daniel Cox, Jane Masters, Bill Volckening, Kathy Casey, Sarah Hromada, Helen Bayly, Carl Saxton, Meg Smath, Jim Matysek, Dennis McManus.

## MINUTES

The meeting was called to order at 8:30 a.m.

1. Committee members introduced themselves.
2. Members of the audience introduced themselves and told everyone how many years they have been attending convention. Special recognition was given to new delegates.
3. Bill Volckening discussed the proposal for a new Communications Award. He explained that this first came up last year, and a subcommittee of Bill, Meg Smath, and Kelly Crandall worked on the wording during the year. The award will be presented annually, and will represent the highest communications achievement in USMS. If approved, this award may apply for funding from one of the USMS national sponsors. The award will be in recognition of an individual or group's communicative efforts that have furthered the progress of USMS. Any USMS swimmer, volunteer or other individual who has contributed to the growth, improvement, or success of USMS through effective, consistent, reliable, innovative use of communications, will be eligible for the award. The award will be based on length of volunteer service to USMS, variety of communication resources used or created, frequency/consistency of communication, content and quality of relayed information, and accuracy of relayed information. Nominations will be proposed by the Communications, Recognition and Awards, Marketing, or Publications Committees, or by any member of these committees, and will be due by June 1 of each year. The Communications Committee will select the winner after June 1, and the award will be presented during the Communications Committee's report at the USMS convention. Winners of the award will be listed in the USMS rule book. Bill clarified that this award will not replace the Newsletter of the Year Award. MSA to accept the proposal.
4. Bill Volckening, the USMS national publication editor, gave his report. Throughout the year Bill worked with the publishers of *SWIM Magazine* to best represent USMS. They tried to balance editorial content, and came up with several new feature ideas, especially personality features on non-elite swimmers. They plan to have more lifestyle features in the future. Several pictorial features on technique have shown Masters swimmers demonstrating technique. Bill has also been serving on a transition team with the proposed new publishers. He emphasized that the purpose of this team was to coordinate details if the House of Delegates does in fact choose Douglas Murphy Publications. We are already 2 or 3 months behind in planning. Bill and others on the transition team (including Meg Smath, Jim Matysek, Lynn Hazlewood, and Mel Goldstein) participated in a conference call and day-long meeting with Douglas Murphy staff. They looked at advertising, rates, and a strategic plan for selling ads, and proposed an editorial calendar for the year that has a specific balance of features and columns. The plan is

detailed but flexible. They also discussed design, and publishing LMSC newsletters in the magazine. The proposed publishers met with representatives from the Southern Pacific and Pacific LMSCs about the newsletter issue. Jim Matysek commented that the Douglas Murphy representatives gave a rather dry presentation, but that when he met with them in person he found them to be very dynamic and knowledgeable. Helen Bayly said that Douglas Murphy failed to win her over yesterday and asked Bill if he had been asked to refrain from making comments. Bill said he had been directed to stay task oriented, and had been working with both publishers, which left little time to do anything else. Michael Moore asked how Bill and Jim's jobs would change if we went with the new publisher. Jim said the current arrangement promotes Sports Publications, and he is not involved in providing *SWIM* material on the web. Instead, we link to SwimInfo, where visitors can view information on *SWIM* Magazine. If we go with the new publishers, we would publish material from the magazine on the web, and also have a members-only section. Bill said his job may take more time with Douglas Murphy, and there would be a different structure on how time is used. The timeline would be longer with Douglas Murphy and the annual planning would be much earlier. Tom asked if the SwimInfo website had declined to put links to our website, and Jim responded that they do have links to our website, but it is not their focus. We have been asked to promote SwimInfo, and we've put links on every page. Lynn reported that SPI had offered to allow us to post articles on usms.org as long as there was a publisher relationship. Helen asked Meg and Jim if they had been told not to talk about being on the task force, and both said that was not the case. Meg agreed with Jim that she was very impressed with Douglas Murphy, and she was trying hard to be impartial and make the best decision for USMS.

5. Hugh asked for volunteers for a subcommittee of three to four people to review the editorial calendar, regardless of which publisher is chosen. Tom Lyndon, Carl Saxton, and Kelly Crandall volunteered. Hugh gave some background information that originally all the content in the magazine was generated by *SWIM*, but over the years USMS has contributed more content. Oversight of this content has mostly fallen to the Executive Committee. At one time we had several volunteer proofreaders, but now only Bill performs that function. Hugh asked for volunteers to serve on a subcommittee to review all content. Meg and Helen volunteered. Wayne McCauley asked if it was true that Douglas Murphy would have complete control of hiring the writers. Bill said that was a misconception, and that Douglas Murphy intended to use USMS writers. Bill also noted that even though the Douglas Murphy staff were not swimmers, they had several good ideas for feature articles, such as one about parents nagging their children to swim. He also noted that they had proposed to have the last page of the magazine devoted to swimming history, including USMS history. He also pointed out that they work with several associations devoted to things they didn't know anything about, but they learn quickly and were able to produce accurate articles on the topic. Susan Ehringer commented that professional journalists are trained to write about any subject, and will do the research necessary to be accurate. Dave Miller noted there seemed to be disagreement in USMS over the direction of the magazine, and asked if USMS intended to move toward being a lifestyle magazine. Bill said yes, because most of our members don't compete. Helen urged us to maintain balance, and continue to have articles geared toward competition. Bill noted that whatever publisher we choose, the Communications Committee needs to be involved in the production of the magazine.
6. Jim Matysek, the USMS Webmaster, reported on the progress of the redesign of the website. The current design is stale, and we have a lot of content on the homepage, but most visitors don't scroll far enough down to see it all. Also, with the current design, we have to lose the navigation bar if we have a lot of horizontal content. There are also some problems with the way Netscape displays the navigation bar. The new design has many more pictures, and more color. The new design will switch from a vertical navigation bar to tabs across the top. The potential categories for the tabs will be home, health and fitness, training, competition, articles and publications, and administration. There will also be a second level navigation bar that changes according to the tab. The central area of the homepage will have three areas: features, latest info, and what's new. Sidebars on both the left and right sides will have more information. News releases will always display the five latest. On the right, different sponsors will be highlighted every time the page is reloaded. If a new publisher for the magazine is chosen, the cover of the latest issue will be displayed, along with a teaser for the articles. The future members-only section will archive old issues. New navigation will show where you are in the hierarchy of pages. Print and email icons will now appear at the top of the page. The discussion forum link will be at the top of the page. The search function will appear on every page, and has been moved to the top of the page. We will continue to provide the link to Amazon.com, but it may no longer appear on the home page. Doug Garcia asked when the members-only section would be available. Jim said it's in the works, but it will not happen in the near future because it is a complex task. Connie Barrett asked if more attention could be paid to design. Jim agreed that design is important, but we don't want "heavy" pages, banner ads, animation, etc., because lots of members still use dialup. Jim said he will be updating the content management system so that others can post content. We have to be careful though about having lots of different people writing and providing content because of the different writing styles.

7. The web development plan and Web Management Guidelines were devised during the year and were included in the pre-convention packet. MSA to support both guidelines. Sandi Rousseau asked who you should contact if you want to put something on the website. Jim said to send an email to support@usms.org. That will go to Jim, Lynn, and Hugh. Carolyn Boak asked about the policy on posting non-sanctioned events in our calendar. In her zone, events have been posted against the wishes of the LMSC in which the event is occurring. MSA the following: Each zone or LMSC shall be responsible for determining which non-USMS events in its geographical area shall be posted on the USMS website. Implementation details will have to be worked out.
8. Jim, Lynn, and Hugh met with Michael Moore and Anne Cribbs to discuss online entries for 2006 Worlds. Their rough estimate is that the task will require at least 500 man-hours of development time. The five agreed that it would be best if Jim and the web developer, Marian Briones, performed the task rather than hire a separate developer, who would require much of Jim's time for management and education. Much of the development effort will be utilized in the online event system for LMSC, club, and zone use. The five are also confident that Jim and Marian will produce a quality product. Based on the desire to use Jim and Marian, Lynn and Hugh evaluated the time requirements and work distribution of the current tasks along with the Worlds development. They determined that Jim and Marian can handle the workload and created the following schedule for completion of tasks:

11/01/04	Records & Top Ten
11/01/04	Registration database specification draft for review
12/01/04	Content management
12/24/04	History & archives
12/24/04	Site redesign
1/01/05	Online entry updates for local use
3/01/05	National publication integration
3/15/05	Short course nationals support
7/15/05	Long course nationals support
9/15/05	2006 Worlds online entries
11/01/05	Online registration beta test

Tom Lyndon asked if we would ask for additional budget for developing online registration. Michael Moore pointed out that our proposal for putting on Worlds says we will have support from our webmaster. Doug Garcia expressed concern about putting other projects on hold for a project that will benefit only a small percentage of our membership, and felt we may need to hire outside help to finish projects. Hugh noted that we had delayed a searchable times database project in order to make time for the registration project.

9. The committee noted that Marian Briones has not been on the job long enough to have much of an impact on web tasks, and believes she should remain on staff. MSA to continue the web developer position for next year at a cost of \$56,000.
10. New business: The subcommittee on long-range communication planning will continue to work during the next year. Tom noted that the Marketing Committee is also working on a long-range plan and we should coordinate with them where possible. Hugh proposed that we form new subcommittees on Technology applications, use of the web in marketing, and review the information on how to start a club. Committee members should approach Hugh if they want to be on any of these subcommittee.
11. New business: The committee discussed deleting of posts on the discussion forum. Generally, vulgar posts, or those attacking people, are deleted. Lynn, Jim, Hugh, and Michael are the only ones who can delete posts. Generally they delete posts after they receive complaints, and they also immediately delete unsolicited ads. These four usually consult among themselves about whether to delete posts, and they must act quickly. In a recent incident, Michael deleted posts after consulting only Hugh, because he felt it was inappropriate to involve Lynn or Jim, as they were discussed in the posts in question. The posts were deleted because they were felt to be potentially libelous. The committee decided we did not need to revise policy on deleting posts because we've only had one incident of posts targeting the people who make the decisions about deleting posts.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:58 a.m.

#### TASKS FOR THE UPCOMING YEAR

1. Continue long-range planning.
2. Explore technology applications, use of the web in marketing, and how to start a club.