



*USLA Activity Report*  
Spring 2004 Board of Directors Meeting

## **Introduction**

It has been my distinct pleasure to work with the Executive Committee since the last meeting. We've had numerous opportunities to discuss a variety of issues that have come up, and have had some excellent results. I greatly appreciate the sincerity and energy involved on the part of everyone.

There have been some changes. Congratulations to three new regional presidents: Patrick McGlamery -- Southeast; Kevin Sweat -- South Atlantic; and Ed Zebrowski -- Mid-Atlantic.

It is my goal to serve you and all USLA members in a fully transparent manner, working to achieve consensus on all issues. As for transparency, I mean that information on all issues that do not need to be confidential for some compelling reason (e.g. contract negotiations or personnel issues) should be available to any member who inquires, particularly members of the Board of Directors. In an effort to accomplish this, I have been copying the Executive Committee on everything of substance, wherever possible. I understand they have been forwarding some of this material to regional representatives. I think some may find this overkill, but better to be overly informed than to feel uninformed.

With respect to consensus, as of the writing of this report, we have had votes on six items among the Executive Committee: 1) NOAA-USLA Letter Agreement, 2) 2004 Nationals Host Agreement, 3) appointment of committee chairs, 4) Bayz eyewear sponsorship, 5) Ingram sponsorship, and 6) apparel sponsor for the 2004 Nationals. All have resulted in unanimous votes, with the exception of my abstention in one case due to a conflict (I had appointed the chairs and felt it inappropriate to vote in favor of my own appointments). Lest you feel there is inadequate dialog, we have utilized a procedure in email votes whereby votes are normally first put to a 10 day discussion period, then voted upon over a seven day period. This has allowed for some excellent discussion and modification of proposals as appropriate to address concerns.

A team approach that adequately serves everyone requires ample opportunity for informed dialog and careful listening. I'm endeavoring to facilitate both and to practice what I preach. I welcome input from any member of USLA on how I can do better at this.

Keeping USLA's many projects on track requires significant work and dedication by the nationally elected officers, regional presidents, and committee chairs. I'd like to thank all of them for the sometimes incredible workload, especially considering that all are volunteers with other responsibilities.

## **USLA -- NOAA Collaboration**

With the valuable assistance of Dr. Peter Hartsock, Legal Advisor Chip More, and Statistician Rick Gould, we have moved forward on a promising collaboration with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Association (particularly the National Weather Service and Sea Grant). The mission of our collaboration is drowning prevention through rip current education. Our primary method for accomplishing this mission is a nationally consistent rip current message emanating from each of our organizations and a combined dedication to rip current awareness. By unanimous vote of the USLA Executive Committee in January, a letter agreement between NOAA and USLA was approved and signed by both parties. Since the November Board of Directors meeting I have traveled to the East Coast three times to meet with our partners and collaborate on work. We have labored to develop a consistent brochure and signs for beaches, which will be available by May. The artwork will be made available free of charge to organiza-

tions and communities that wish to print, post, and distribute these materials. We are also working on a consistent message for each of our websites. Printed materials will credit both organizations. They have been designed at no cost to USLA under a contract to NOAA. On the opening day of National Beach Safety Week, May 24, 2004, NOAA and USLA will convene a *national* press conference in Wrightsville Beach, NC. Speakers will include the NOAA Administrator (Vice Admiral Conrad C. Lautenbacher, Jr. U.S. Navy (Ret.)); the USLA President, Sandee LaMotte (wife of former CNN producer Larry LaMotte who drowned in a rip current in 2003), and USLA Public Education Committee Chair Peter Davis. This collaboration has tremendous potential for greatly increasing awareness of this primary surf hazard and awareness of the leadership of USLA in drowning prevention. Future projects are planned to include PSA's and other educational initiatives.

## **Host Agreement**

For each national competition, USLA has long entered into a Host Agreement to define the responsibilities of USLA and the host chapter. Since shortly after the November meeting, the Volusia Surf Lifesaving Association (via Kevin Sweat), our Legal Advisor and I worked together to refine the Host Agreement. This necessarily involved quite a bit of give and take, but the ultimate product should be of substantial value to all involved. As previously noted, the agreement was unanimously approved and has been signed. Hopefully, this agreement can serve as a model for the future and this spring we can sign an agreement with Virginia Beach (previously designated to host the 2005 Nationals), thereby having an agreement in place almost a year and a half in advance. In the future, I expect we should be able to identify hosts and sign host agreements shortly thereafter. This advance planning should help the hosts promote their event and get a jumpstart on fundraising.

## **California Legislation**

Liaison Officer Eric Bauer located a legislator in California willing to carry legislation to mandate USLA standards for open water lifeguards in California. I assisted in drafting legislation, which is now a bill in the California Legislature. It is now up to the Southwest and Northwest regions as to whether they wish to endorse this effort. If they choose to endorse the effort, I would recommend that IJSLA do so as well. I think there is a good chance it will be successful.

## **Mission Statement**

A draft mission statement has been developed for USLA, which I think might be helpful in focusing our work and garnering interest from sponsors and grantors. It was circulated to the Executive Committee. Some valuable input was received from Mike Bartlett. With that input, I propose that our mission statement be: "To prevent drowning and other injuries in the aquatic environment through public education and the promotion of high standards in aquatic rescue." This is certainly up for discussion and modifications to the wording may be appropriate. Regardless, I think this or a similar statement should be reviewed and adopted by the Board of Directors so that when people ask what we stand for, we have something succinct to put forward.

## **Lifesaving Development**

Some of the development efforts we have been involved in are beginning to pay off in a significant way. In Denton, Florida the Southeast Region recently built upon the momentum from a prior on-site visit and report to help train over 40 people in a course meeting USLA standards. I will leave it to Southeast to report further, but these personnel will be patrolling previously unpatrolled beaches this summer. In Pensacola, the Santa Ross Island Authority recently retrained all its personnel in a course designed to meet USLA standards, hired a public safety manager, acquired new motive equipment for patrol and response, and are in the process of building a new headquarters. This is a big turnaround for the agency. Both of these efforts are likely to create momentum in the Panhandle, where so many rip current deaths have occurred.

## **Committee Chairs**

In November an offer was extended to anyone interested the opportunity to put themselves or others forward as committee chairs. Much interest was received. After careful consideration. I proposed appointees to the Executive Committee for their approval. Some minor changes were made as a result of consultations and the list was approved unanimously (with my abstention). We have divided the committees into “regular” committees and “working group” committees. The regular committees have one member from each region (appointed by the region), a chair, in some cases a vice-chair, and in some cases our Medical Advisor. These regular committees deal with fairly broad issues within their purview, issues which are likely to require full participation and review by all regions. The working group committees are intended to be smaller, with members selected by the chairs. The intent of these committees is to gather experts to work on more narrowly defined topics, like the website development.

## **Committee Scheduling**

One of the opportunities presented by designating committee members in advance is advance scheduling of the committees. This has been done with best efforts to avoid overlap of committee members who serve on more than one committee, although that is not always possible. Hopefully, this will allow for better preplanning and scheduling. We shall see.

## **Lifeguard Trademark Issue**

In November 2003, Mr. Colosi raised a concern with respect to trademark of the word “lifeguard.” Mr. Colosi, Mr. Moore, and I have developed a possible resolution, which Mr. Colosi will be bringing to the Development Committee for consideration.

## **Skin Cancer Foundation**

In November 2003, a presentation was made to the Board of Directors by the Skin Cancer Foundation that involved potential for a collaboration similar to the NOAA-USLA collaboration, but aimed at skin cancer prevention. I have engaged in two conference calls with the representatives we met and they have submitted a proposal which will be reviewed by the Public Education Committee. This is a no cost proposal that would have each organization seeking sponsorship for the initiative, but sharing any sponsorship dollars generated for that purpose. With input of the Public Education Committee, it will be up to the Board of Directors as to whether we should pursue this opportunity. If so, the Legal Advisor stands ready to develop a letter agreement with SCF.

## **Guidestar**

Guidestar is a website which serves as a compendium listing of nonprofit organizations on the Internet. This organization includes the most recent tax forms of organizations, as well as a variety of information about them. Many donors and grant organizations use Guidestar as a reference to make sure the organization is legitimate and to make granting or donation decisions. The listing for USLA, up until now, has been very basic and apparently taken from our publicly available tax forms. That information has been updated, greatly expanded, and submitted to Guidestar. Hopefully, this will assist with garnering donations, grants, and perhaps even sponsorships. The website is: [www.guidestar.org](http://www.guidestar.org)

## **GO JG**

In consultation with our Legal Advisor, in December I wrote the principals involved in the GO JG organization to convey information related to the vote of the Board of Directors in November 2003 and to invite dialog. I met with the principals of this initiative on December 31 in San Diego. We had an excellent meeting discussing all manner of alternatives. Subsequently, they submitted a written proposal. This proposal has public education elements, so I would expect that the Public Education Committee will review it. The proposal also has some representational issues which may best be reviewed by the

Executive Committee, in consultation with our Legal Advisor.

## **USLA Ring**

Since the November meeting, with the assistance of Bill Oat of the Cape May Beach Patrol, Jostens was contacted with the idea of creating a ring for USLA members with the USLA logo. This is a promising opportunity which has been referred to the Ways and Means Committee for further review. If approved, lifeguards could order the ring via the USLA website.

## **Dr. Henry Heimlich**

Information was brought to my attention that certain assertions made by Dr. Heimlich at a prior Board of Directors meeting in Alexandria, Virginia and in American Lifeguard Magazine might be in question. This is no small matter, since some lifeguards are undoubtedly following Heimlich recommendations. I consulted with our Medical Advisor, who recently sent a letter to Dr. Heimlich requesting validation of specific claims made by him. There is some significant media interest in this issue.

## **Workplace Giving**

Mr. Farry has kindly indicated that he is developing a plan to increase the level of our audits so that Mr. Colosi can work on a workplace giving proposal he has previously made.

## **USLA.ORG**

The new version of [www.usla.org](http://www.usla.org) was launched in late November 2003. Charles Hartl has now taken over most of the work of overseeing this site via the Website Committee, which he now chairs. He'll report separately on our status.

## **Conclusion**

Working together on the many projects proposed by our officers, committee chairs, and members, there is great promise for significant progress to achieve some of our long held goals for USLA. Please email me, call me, or take me aside to discuss any issues you think we ought to be addressing. Together we can make a real difference for USLA, the lifesaving profession, and drowning prevention.

Lifesaving Aye

B.Chris Brewster, President

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