

Southwest Region - United States Lifesaving Association

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World Wide Web: www.cslsa.org

ADVISOR'S REPORT TO THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS APRIL 6-7, 2006

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By Robert A. Moore

The last six months have been trying for the Moore family. As you remember I left the Fall meeting at Castaic early due to a family emergency. My Mother-in-Law passed away one week later. Last month my Mother passed away. I have also had two surgeries. This difficult time has allowed me the opportunity to reflect on my 40 years of experience in the Association. I realized that what I have been saying for years was demonstrated again. When one member of the Executive Board fails to carry his or her weight, the remainder of the Board members step up to the plate to fill the void. At no time does any of your Executive Board members complain, they just do what needs to be done. I have observed this over the years and have been proud of my peers and myself for doing the right thing. But this time, I was the one who needed support and they were there. I want to thank the Executive Board and Webmaster Pat Francis for their unquestioning loyalty to the cause of lifesaving and their support in my time of need.

I am sure that others will report on similar topics, but I want to give you my perspective. I served on our Bylaws committee with Chair Don Rohrer, member Rob McGowan, and member and work horse Bill Richardson. We reported at the last meeting on the work that we had done on revising the USLA Bylaws and were going to present at the USLA meeting at Dana Point. Well, we presented! Don Rohrer and myself served on the USLA Bylaws Committee for 3 days! We met all day Wednesday prior to the meeting. We met a half-day on Thursday during committees. We met all day Friday while others enjoyed the well-planned Educational Conference. And we met for part of Saturday to finalize what we discussed so we had a printed document to distribute for Proposed Bylaw Changes to be voted on at the Spring meeting in Annapolis, MD. I could say many things, but what struck me the most was the spirit of cooperation throughout the country. The people who served on the committee were the right people for the job. The committee members were there to work as a team. Thanks to the hard work of the CSLSA we had a document to work off of instead of the original Bylaws, which were in disarray as far as orderly progression. Our fears never materialized. There was never the feeling that others felt that the CSLSA was trying to shove something down their throats. As we went through each and every word we explained our reasoning. Other regions questioned, supported, reasoned, offered other suggestions, disagreed, but it never got nasty! When there was a difference of opinion and the topic was thoroughly discussed there was a vote taken. Majority ruled and we moved on to the next topic. Done! No one held a grudge, they just moved on to the next topic. It was amazing. All of those hours holed up in a room when it was a beautiful day outside or the 'fun' events were going on, no one complained, everyone was there for the same reason – success of the organization! Wow! It was the best USLA meeting that I attended since forming the USLA in 1979!

The final product for the USLA Bylaws was distributed for review and to be voted on at the meeting in Annapolis at the end of this month. The positive thing is that there were representatives from all regions so the committee members were to sell the document to their respective regions. This should prevent the 'negative reaction without information to explain' syndrome. I am hopeful that the document that we worked on so hard will be approved unanimously in Annapolis. If not, it will be another six months before we can vote again. I strongly recommend that the CSLSA Board of Directors support this document and authorize our delegates to vote in favor of the USLA Proposed Bylaw Changes at the USLA Board of Directors meeting. This support should also allow us the flexibility to withhold any piece of the document if there is something that was overlooked or grossly out of place due to a new legal interpretation.

A new committee was formed with the same players to review the CSLSA Bylaws and Policy and Procedures. We met and used a document that Bill Richardson constructed based on the proposed USLA Bylaw changes. We wanted to tailor our Bylaws to coincide with the USLA Bylaws that included our own special needs. What will be presented today will be CSLSA Bylaw Changes Proposal. This proposal is based on the approval of the USLA Bylaws. By presenting today, we allow the six-month time period to progress for approval at our Fall Board of Directors meeting. If we wait for the USLA to approve their Bylaw Change Proposals this Spring, propose our Bylaw Change Proposals in the Fall, we would have to wait until next Spring to vote. Our efforts were to streamline the process. If for some reason the USLA Bylaws are not approved or parts of them are withheld, then I would recommend that we approve what we can in the Fall. Then we make the appropriate changes to correspond with the USLA's changes. We would then distribute those remaining changes and vote on them in the Spring of 2007. Clear as mud?

On the USLA front, I am optimistic for the first time in quite some time. We have had great leadership in the past, but the spirit of the organization, regionalism, and general lack of trust was not healthy. If what was demonstrated in the Bylaws Committee at Dana Point continues, the USLA's future will thrive. The future of the organization is the strong committee work, consensus building, spirit of cooperation, and trust. The leadership is important, but without the work of the Board of Directors and Executive Committee, the leader has no value. In other words, you are only as strong as your team. Allowing the body to take some of the load and not have everything tied up with one or two people is a healthy thing. There are many talented people in our organization, with their positive support and hard work; the USLA will reach its goals. Bridges have been built. We can only hope this 'trust' will continue. It only takes one selfish act to destroy what we have. I hope the leadership acknowledges this and treads lightly through difficult issues and facilitates positive solutions that build trust within the Board of Directors and Executive Committee. This is critical even if the action taken by the Board of Directors or Executive Committee is not the desired result of leadership. It is not personal; it is the right thing to do. The USLA is a ground up organization, not a top down one. Keep up the good work!

I am concerned with the progress of the USLA Nationals in Huntington Beach. I know there are a few hard working individuals who are putting it all on the line. We need cooperation throughout the region. In the future, the USLA needs to step up and organize their own Nationals. It should be a machine that goes to a location and sets up shop, like the OP Pro as an example. Huntington City Lifeguards do not have to do the work or organizing the OP Pro, they are contracted to provide public safety by the OP Pro machine. Tom Gill from Virginia Beach faced a similar situation last year. It is killing the host agency and organizers! It needs to stop.

As I mentioned earlier, I was preoccupied a bit so I did not offer as much 'Advice' as usual. I am not too sure that the President did not welcome the peace and quiet. I look forward to a positive 2006 and hopefully I will heal both physically and emotionally. I will be giving more advice as time moves on, so Mr. President, get ready!