

2020 USMS Convention – aka – USMS Virtual Annual Meeting
August 19 – September 27, 2020
Meegan Wilson

This was the longest Convention/Annual Meeting I have ever attended and I'm sure I speak for everyone. National Office employee Jessica Reilly did a nice job providing the Zoom platform. What I did not understand was that there were still committee meetings opposed to one another. A normal Convention lasts three to four days. The schedule made no sense to me, but I understand that there is a time change across the United States. I was surprised that more weekends were not used to complete the annual meeting quicker and not take up so many evenings during the week. That way committee meetings could have run unopposed and more could have been attended by delegates or other USMS members that were interested to see what some committees are doing. I do not believe that committee chairs had any input in the schedule, but I could be wrong. I feel that USMS does not respect committee work.

I attended the following: Annual Meeting Overview and Zoom Training (8/19/20), Long Distance 1 (8/30/20), Recognition and Awards (8/31/20), History and Archives (9/1/20), LMSC Development (9/2/20), Records and Tabulations (9/3/20), Finance 1 (9/8/20), Virtual Annual Meeting Orientation (9/9/20), Dixie Zone meeting (9/10/20), Legislation 2 (9/14/20), Rules 2 (9/15/20), Long Distance 2 (9/16/20), Finance 2 (9/17/20), Board of Directors (9/21/20), Legislation 3 (9/23/20), Long Distance 3 (9/24/20), House of Delegates 1 (9/25/20), House of Delegates 2 (9/26/20), and House of Delegates 3 (9/27/20). HOD 3 lasted eight hours. Whew!

There were a few highlights. Number one were the award presentations which were superb. Sheila Carpenter-van Dijk, Bob Jennings, and Meredith Moore all received the 2020 USMS Dorothy Donnelly Service Award. Karyn Austin (Swamp Water Aquatics), Bob Jennings (Villages Aquatic Swim Team), Jeff Waddle (Tsunami Masters), and Rick Walker (Sarasota Sharks) all received the 2020 Kerry O'Brien Coaches Award. Frank 'Skip' Thompson's acceptance speech for the Captain Ransom J Arthur MD Award was really good.

The Memoriam presentation was also very nice. Approximately 100 current or former Masters swimmers have died since the last convention that we know of. It should have been presented at the first HOD meeting, but it wasn't. You can find all of the presentations on the USMS website under 2020 Annual Meeting and I would encourage everyone to see them.

The History and Archives Committee has located and scanned past National Open Water and Postal results from 1974 - 1997 and have sent the results to the National Office for posting on the USMS website. Hopefully the results will be posted soon. Also, Anna Lea Matysek is adding volunteer national positions to individual swimmer profile pages. If you have been on a national USMS committee or have held another national role, check out your profile page – it should be updated.

There were several lowlights. Jack Groselle did not win his bid for Dixie Zone At-Large Director, Britta O'Leary was elected. The HOD voted the past presidents off the Board of Directors. This is a shame. While they had no vote, they did have a voice – and now all of that past history will be lost. That seems to be the goal of USMS, to get rid of past history. This is our 50th year celebration – see how we celebrated our past by getting rid of it. The good news is that past President Mel Goldstein won his At-Large Director bid for the Great Lakes Zone, so there will still be some past history and diversity on the board. I encourage other past presidents to do the same and keep their voices heard.

The Unified Fee passed. This means that our members will be paying \$7 more for membership next year and LMSCs will not be able to change their own fees. This Unified Fee also applies to Club registrations. It is a shame that USMS continued with this proposal this year, particularly due to COVID 19 when things are so up in the air. Why increase membership and club fees at this time? I worry that USMS will just see a further decrease in memberships. But USMS and the National Office now have more control over the LMSCs.

Other lowlights were USMS's stifling delegates from making comments thus reducing discussion on important topics; telling delegates to stop talking about how we have always done it this way; suggesting to past presidents that they should not vote on L13 (to remove past presidents from the board) because they have a conflict of interest; micromanaging the chairs of the committees. I believe you see a trend here. All Delegates have a conflict of interest. They represent all parts of the country. This is where USMS gets their diversity. This is important for the success and future of USMS. Handpicking Board of Director members because they agree with the current direction is not good for USMS. We need discussion, we need diversity, we need transparency.