

Secretary's Notes from PNA Retreat: October 29, 2011

The Board of the Pacific Northwest Association of Masters Swimmers met in retreat to:

- Review PNA's 2010 Strategic Plan
- Compare PNA's Plan to the Strategic Plan adopted by USMS in September 2011
- Review PNA's Accomplishments and Shortcomings in 2011
- Set goals and objectives for 2012
- Identify "Make It Stick" Tools to help achieve the goals and objectives

The following notes should be read along with the "Flipchart Notes" prepared by Rich Seibert, who volunteered to facilitate/moderate the Retreat. Rich's unflagging energy, positive outlook and skill at keeping the discussion "on point" contributed much to a productive meeting. Below, roughly following the order of discussion, are summaries of key topics:

PNA LMSC & PNA Club

Resolving the relationship between the Pacific Northwest Association (PNA LMSC) and Pacific Northwest Aquatics (PNA Club) emerged as a major need. Herb Cook summarized the position of USMS that an LMSC and a Club must be separate in both governance and finances. Hugh Moore stated his opinion that PNA Club should operate independently and chart its own course. Cathy Casey pointed out that PNA Club presently functions only to support area swimmers at national meets. Rich Seibert offered to work on this issue and bring ideas back to the Board in January, 2012.

Minimum Standards

Hugh Moore mentioned that a revision of USMS Minimum Standards for LMSCs should be completed by January, 2012, and advocated that PNA should conduct a self-assessment using the new standards. Rich Seibert agreed, adding that a self-assessment by Clubs also would be a good outcome of the Minimum Standards process.

Volunteers

It was noted that volunteers are an important component of the USMS Strategic Plan. Lisa Dahl said a scarcity of new volunteers in recent years has hindered PNA's ability to achieve its goals. Cathy Casey said PNA needs younger volunteers, people with specific skill sets and leadership potential. Mike Grimm suggested using The WetSet and the PNA website as "touch points" to reach potential volunteers. Hugh Moore noted that many team representatives do not actively participate in PNA Board activities, and should be encouraged to get engaged and to recruit new volunteers from their teams. Lisa Dahl suggested a goal of getting 10 team representatives engaged in 2012. Rich Seibert proposed identifying three or four key focus areas and finding a "champion" to lead volunteer development for each of those areas.

Accomplishments in 2011

Board members reviewed PNA's accomplishments in three key focus areas:

- Serve Coaches: sent 3 coaches to Nationals; 16 to USMS regional certification programs; 30+ to local ASCA training; 2 to ASCA World Clinic. Coaches also met via conference calls.
- Serve PNA Members, including both competitive and fitness swimmers: distributed new swimmer goodie bags; published The WetSet; sanctioned and promoted pool meets and open water events; obtained pool time for postal swims; maintained and contracted the redesign of PNA website; secured member discounts from merchandise vendors.
- Serve Teams and Team Representatives: provided support and information to meet sponsors; promoted meets and team activities via The WetSet and PNA website; organized relays at Nationals; provided USMS rulebooks to registered teams; maintained and published team contact information; registered teams and tracked team membership.

Goals Not Accomplished in 2011

- Open Water Challenge Series.
- Fitness Swimmer Initiative.
- Volunteer Recruitment.

Objectives for 2012

- Serve Coaches: Make "Club-in-a-Box" materials available to all teams and team representatives; provide training opportunities for all PNA coaches; coordinate USMS coach certification with Dick Hannula's USA Swimming coach certification clinic.
- Serve PNA Members: Provide information and services to non-competitive swimmers via The WetSet, the PNA website and links to USMS resources; expand and enhance vendor relationships; provide social opportunities at PNA Champs meet—consider a mixer or keynote speaker.
- Serve Teams, Team Reps and Clubs: Communicate a full range of information about PNA through consistent messages via as many channels as possible; maximize the benefit of PNA's redesigned website for teams and team reps; use social media—Facebook, Twitter, etc.; survey the needs of team reps; track issues involving pool facilities and pool time—assist teams when appropriate.
- Grow PNA Membership: Reach out to potential members through ad fliers, communication with triathlon clubs, exit surveys at meets and open water events, etc.; emphasize eligibility for USMS membership at age 18; provide tips on health and fitness; provide information on new equipment; offer social opportunities, excursions and group experiences—e.g. Olympics-watching parties.

Making It Stick

Board members agreed that PNA needs one or more "point persons" to take responsibility for each 2012 objective. Rich Seibert volunteered to assume responsibility for coordinating communications. Lisa Dahl volunteered to coordinate Club and Coach Services. Linda Chapman, Sarah Welch and Sally Dillon volunteered to coordinate sanctions and clinics; Arni Litt volunteered to coordinate membership growth initiatives. Still needed is a point person to coordinate volunteer recruitment and services.