

## 2006 USSS Technical Vice President's Report Carole Mitchell

What a hectic year we have had! Crazy busy! Thanks for the opportunity to serve on the Board of Directors in this position. The work we've done this past year can only be described as critical to the future of USSS and I'm honored to have been a part of this process.

Since things were so busy and crazy this past year, I'll just highlight **some** of the things I did or helped with:

- Considered rule waiver requests in conjunction with President Ginny Jasontek.
- Proofed the rulebook with Betty Hazle. This proved to be one of the hardest years for this...as there were so many changes and we knew the technical rules wouldn't be reprinted until 2009. Thanks to Myrna and Diane as well!
- Attended the 2005 US Masters Championships in Claremont, FL. While the hurricane forced the cancellation of the banquet, it also forced the events planned for Sunday to be held on Saturday evening. The weather delays didn't dampen the spirit of the wonderful competitors and the National Training Center (especially Dave Teske) and the Central Florida Sports Commission kept things lively. In fact, the hurricane convinced the masters that ending on Saturday would be the way to go in the future. So, the 2007 US Masters will be the first time for this shortened schedule, which should prove easier on the judges (who typically had to stay until noon on Sunday for the team competition). While we only had 2 combos entered, (and the storm caused a pause in between the 2) the event proved a huge crowd pleaser and we hope to have more entries for 2006.
- Attended the Fall Board of Directors meeting which was held prior to the National Judges Update.
- Attended the Coaches College where I had the opportunity to meet with various members to discuss the proposed make up of the new Board of Directors. I used the opportunity to see what people thought of the direction it appeared we were headed and took suggestions back to the BOD for consideration.
- Attended the January BOD meeting where we worked to finalize the new BOD structure.
- Attended the 2006 US Collegiate Championships at Stanford University. Again, I feel this meet has come so far and truly showcases the breadth of talent in the US. A truly exciting competition. Congrats to our hosts for a wonderful championship and for claiming the high point title.
- During the 2006 US Junior Championships, I had to be in Orlando for a work. (And you thought this was all I did...) This is the first meet I've missed in 3 years of being in this position. Thanks to Shannon Korpela, the west zone tech chair, for overseeing the technical aspects of this meet. Except for a well timed(?) fire alarm, the meet went very well.
- Attended the 2006 US Senior Championships in Ft. Lauderdale. Thanks to the sites committee for being on call in the fall when damage from the hurricanes appeared to put the host city in jeopardy. But, all was well, thanks to the very, very hard work of meet host Cindy DeMarco and the entire Coral Springs team. Again, a wonderful championship. We were happy to have swimmers from Israel, Puerto Rico and Aruba competing. It was wonderful having the diving well, far away from the competition pool, open at all times during the competition.
- Attended the June Board of Directors meeting where we continued to work on the future BOD makeup as well as working on the 2006 & 2007 budget. Not an easy task, to say the least. Participated in all BOD conference calls.
- Attended the 2006 Esynchro Age Group Championships. Thanks to Shannon Korpela and Beth Moore for tag teaming with me to cover the 9 long days of this meet. We get spoiled every time we go to Federal Way...as it is such a wonderful facility. The diving well and opposite end of the competition pool remained open throughout the championships and during the older girls team practice with music, we used a formula I first tried in Indy the year before...teams rotated from the lap pool, to the competition pool, to the diving well and then got out. This worked extremely well in allowing teams space to practice without running over others. Thanks to the wonderfully prepared hosts for a fantastic championship. (But, whoever said Seattle isn't hot, certainly wasn't there this summer!)
- Attended the 2006 US Open Championships in very, very hot Orlando. This was a smaller meet than last year's championship, with a much smaller international contingent (which was anticipated as this is a major year for team 1 and junior competitions). However, we were lucky to have an international evaluator from Egypt (Danae Christou) and judges and swimmers from Puerto Rico and Canada. While we tend to think the Senior Open is too small, the international judges and evaluator seem to like the "smallness", especially when compared to the length of the junior events. Adding an extra day to the beginning made the junior meet much more manageable. However, I've asked coaches for feedback on suggestions for "fixing" the schedule, including moving Combo prelims to Thursday and making Thursday a combo only day...as well as having Sr Tech events on Friday and Sr Free events on Saturday only...instead of tech/free/free as it was this year. Once I receive feedback, I'll report my conclusions.
- Thanks to my wonderful committee chairs and their members for doing so much this year. These chairs (and members) work very hard during the year keeping up with scoring (Jackie McDaniel), rules (Diane Hunsinger & Myrna Hagedorn), figures (Ginny Chadwich)-- (can't FINA ever get things right the first time?), collegiates (Barbara McNamee), masters (Elizabeth Knowles), event management (Jill Ranucci), competitive programs (Karen Paulk) and sites (Ted Roche). You don't see how much work they do, but believe me, they are all working very hard for you throughout the year. And I appreciate all of their help.

This year we faced several challenges, with the sound equipment at US Opens topping the list. Oceanears brought an experimental new system, which proved unreliable. Senior Finals proved particularly frustrating, and was commented upon by foreign competitors. We had only two “sound” instances at the Esynchro Age Groups two weeks earlier, both due to faulty CD’s. The equipment used at the meet in Federal Way belonged to the Pacific Northwest Association which graciously lends their equipment for all meets held in the Weyerhauser facility, for which I am grateful. I’d also like to thank the Pacific Association who provided additional sound equipment for the US Collegiate Championships. Throughout all of this, we relied on the wonderfully patient Ed Kaminski who, as usual, proved to be extremely calm during some very difficult times. We all appreciate the attention he gives our music and we are thankful he loves what he does.

There were also a number of scoring issues that appeared at the Esynchro and US Open Championships. We don’t know why some of the issues occurred, but the scoring committee is working with Norm Donofrio to determine if it’s due to something as simple as using the program in windows (which it was not written to do) or if it’s something more critical. Whatever the outcome, USSS has to look at the future of this scoring system and whether the DOS program with which it was written will continue to work in an ever changing windows world. Somewhere, we’ll have to find some money to support a new program (or find someone with the time and willingness to write a new one).

Again this year, as I have done in the previous 2 years, I have taken advantage of the zone technical chairs to help at the national meets. They have worked beside me and are trained to cover if I’m not there. I love the fact that there are 3 people who can cover so I don’t have to be on the pool deck every minute of every day. That’s what the Tech chairs are supposed to do, and I’m grateful for the 3 active chairs who’ve helped over the years. (Shannon Korpela, Joanna Scoons and Beth Moore-who really wasn’t the south zone tech chair, but acted as one at national meets...however, she is the incoming tech chair for the south, so she’ll continue to help!)

Shannon Korpela and I spent the team finals at Esynchro Age Groups under water in the viewing window at the pool. Due to this, we have suggested to the Officials that we create a policy which states that “underwater controller(s) may be used” at National Championships. This way, if there is a window available, it may be used. This will be indicated in the final meet announcements, if this might happen, so that all are aware of the possibility.

Still photography by “professional” photographers (who are not suppliers/sponsors of USSS) proved to be a huge problem this year. Discussion will continue over how to address this problem, which is a major concern. Photographers have been selling pictures online which is in conflict with our Start to Finish contract. The office continues to work on this problem, for which there is no easy solution.

Thanks to the office staff, who, while mostly new, proved invaluable to me both in the office and at events. I’m excited to be working with each one of them. Special thanks to Taylor Payne for always saying “yes” when I needed her to do anything...even at the last minute.

A final and personal note...most of you know what a hellacious year this has been for me, my family and my team. One year ago, while at convention (Sept. 15), we got the call that Jessica Beck, a 7 year veteran of the Dolpholinas and a huge part of the Ohio State team (a senior) passed away in her sleep. I have not gotten over losing such a wonderful and close friend, and I never will. But the love and support so many of you have shown me, my daughter Jennifer and my entire team continues to inspire me. Unbelievably, on June 15 (exactly 9 months later) tragedy struck our team again. We lost Diana Hahn, a 2 year member of our team (who previously had swum with Pat Easterling) who was killed in a car crash just a few blocks from her home-at the age of 17. While this happened as we were trying to get ready for the Esynchro champs, it’s hard to imagine what my team went through. We went to Federal Way and I can’t thank you enough for the love and support you once again showed us. A special thanks goes to the Potomac Valley Pearls, the ANA Synchers, the Northern Virginia Nereids, the Ohio State Buckeyes and the countless coaches and swimmers who came up to us to express their sympathy. Special thanks also goes to Nancy, Beth, Paulette, Ted, Pam, Shari, Linda, Ginny J, Ginny C, Eugenia, Vicki, Laura, Shannon, Cheryl, Karen and Megan and everyone else who just hugged me and didn’t have to say anything. And while some of the judges fussed at my yellow shirt on deck, those who knew why I was wearing it understood the strength it took just to be at the pool, much less think about competing or running a meet. I pray that no team has to go through what my team has been through, but I’m happy to be part of a sport where so many care about us. Special thanks to Betty Hazle who continues to be my sounding board and teacher.

It has been an honor and a privilege to serve as the Technical VP for the past 3 years. Thank you for your continued support and encouragement.