



May 13, 2009

Letter from the President

It has been my pleasure to serve as President of Midlakes and I want to keep you updated on recent happenings. We have dealt with a potentially contentious issue, taken on new responsibilities and successfully navigated an insurance cost crisis. It reminds me of the annual ritual that swim team parents are all dealing with as you start another season. It is a huge volunteer operation and it is impressive that everyone chips in their valuable time to make this a great program for our young athletes.

The contentious issue concerned what to do about not being able to use KCAC this year. This is all behind us now but many of you had strong opinions concerning how we would handle our end-of-season events. The Age-Group Finals we have planned will be excellent. We plan to slow down the previous Pre-lim format and present awards during the meet to recognize the top performers. During the Spring Meeting there was also an idea for a two-stage event (pre-lim in the morning and final in the afternoon), especially for the older swimmers. This may be a good idea for future events, but I have not heard from anyone since the meeting, while others have mentioned that they appreciate the simplicity of the Timed Final. It was impressive that everyone was able to present and support their opinions, especially with the League using our Website to solicit input. A good decision was reached, even as we now consider how to make things better this season and in the future.

Our new responsibility is the Midlakes T-shirt. This promotional item is highly valued by league swimmers and their parents. Kate Goodwin at Mercerwood provided excellent information and supplier relationships from which to base our program. Now with Rebecca Thornton from Samena taking on the management and design we should be again offering an appealing design and attractive value. The proceeds will generate funds to support our program, such as providing the Championship pools with \$500 to help them offset the costs of hosting a large meet.

The insurance crisis came when we went to renew our contract. Some of you may remember the old days when Midlakes did not carry insurance and relied on good luck and the insurance of our member pools. But in recent years the league has carried insurance to cover our activities and directors as modern life requires insurance. Hopefully we will never use it, though the opportunity for a chipped tooth or worse could occur at our activities. Anyway, our insurance carrier told us that all pools needed to be in Compliance with new Federal Regulations.

(King County has excellent information if you are interested, under Virginia Graeme Baker Act at <http://www.kingcounty.gov/healthservices/health/ehs/pools.aspx>)

Since we have not all retrofitted our drains yet, the next least expensive insurance policy was \$8,000 more which we could not afford to pay. (This all occurred a few weeks ago as the clubs were hustling to get their parent information packets together, etc.) Nancy Anderson, Treasurer, from Newport Yacht Club and I worked to find other options which eventually led to affordable (still expensive) policies and finally induced our insurance carrier to relax their under-righting standard for the year rather than lose our business. Nancy surveyed all of the pools and compiled their plans to comply with the new regulations. It was interesting to learn that our insurance covers league activities such as Dual Meets rather than Facility issues such as the new drain cover requirements, but following an accident the concepts of primary and secondary insurance can get messy. Also I learned that just draining and refilling a pool costs thousands of dollars. This reinforces for me that our network of community pools is a tremendous resource that we often overlook until the costs to repair and update shock us into action.

Your volunteer efforts are essential to Midlakes and we are doing our best to manage your swim league. I think we are also a networking resource as your pool faces individual challenges. Please let me know if there are things Midlakes can do to better support your individual pools.

Yours in Aquatics,

Ron Griffin