

## Chairman's Chat:

by **Nadine KM Day** | ILMSA Chair | [nday@usms.org](mailto:nday@usms.org)

Special thanks goes to Greg Weber. Greg has relocated to Tennessee and he will no longer be the ILMSA registrar. We have formed a registration team with Erik Van Etten, who is from Central Illinois Masters; he is leading the registration team as the new ILMSA registrar. We also had a few swimmers step and volunteer to help with registration-Ron Kurza, Meghan McCabe, MJ Slikas and John Strange. Thank you all.

At the USMS national level, USMS has hired a new Executive Director, Rob Butcher from Charlotte, NC. I was fortunate to serve on the ED search task force and I am currently assisting in the transition of the new ED. I am truly excited about USMS having a national presence and becoming a staffed organization with great volunteers.

ILMSA Summer Fitness Event: 3rd Annual: I swam a marathon this summer, what did you do? Fitness Liz Kooy has a cool new design this year, illustrated by Carrie Ohm from the Chicago Smelts.

This long course season: The Park Ridge Penguins are still surviving and hosted the 1500 on June 26th. Evanston Masters hosted a long course meet on August 3rd. Mark your calendars for the 18th Annual Chicago Masters Big Shoulders event which will be held on September 6, 2008.

Congratulations to all the Illinois Swimmers who participated in the USMS Short Course National Championships in Austin, TX; YMCA Masters Nationals in Ft. Lauderdale, FL and the IGLA Championships in Washington, DC and the USMS LCM National Championships in Mt. Hood, Oregon.

I would also like to thank everyone for participating in Masters Swimming. Whether or not you compete, you have taken steps in your life to stay healthy and fit. I commend you for that. Everyone swims for different reasons, competition, fitness, and socialization; but we all have swimming as our common bond.

## Swimming for Life ... Stay Wet, Swim Fast, and Have Fun ... Fun, Fitness, and Friendship.

## History of Lincoln Masters / Illinois Masters / Team Illinois Masters

by **Irene David** | Past Chair of CMSA | Vice-Chair of CMSA when Lincoln Masters was formed | Past President of Illinois Masters

Masters Swimming got its start in 1970. It was taken over by the AAU in January, 1972, and got underway in Illinois immediately. Several local teams were formed in the first two years and rivalries between them were strong, but friendly. We had hotly contested state meets, and we sent several Illinois swimmers to nationals. The Second Long Course National Championship meet was held in Chicago in 1973, sponsored by the now defunct Ryall Masters (Glen Ellyn) and UIC.

In 1975 several Illinois swimmers were attending Short Course Nationals in Fort Lauderdale. We started discussing the fact that although we had several swimmers there, no single team had enough for a relay. Most Illinois teams had only one or two swimmers there. We thought it would be great if we could become a unified team for nationals so that everyone could swim on relays and enjoy the camaraderie of having teammates at the meet.

The concept of a statewide "umbrella" team began to be discussed. The idea was not new:

Michigan was doing it, and in New England an entire region (New England Masters) was doing it. The big swimming states like California and Florida had no need for statewide teams because they had such large numbers of swimmers on their local teams who went to nationals. But we in Illinois did not.

The umbrella team was widely discussed among those who regularly attended nationals. It was brought up at every Central Masters Swimming Association (CMSA) meeting, but one influential Illinois swimmer was opposed to the idea and managed to quash the concept every time it came up for discussion at the semi-annual CMSA meetings.

In the meantime, several swimmers who regularly went to nationals, convinced that the statewide team would never come to fruition, formed a local club called Illinois Masters. One by one the leading swimmers left their local teams and joined the Illinois Masters. Most did not do that easily, because local team loyalties

were strong, but eventually the prospect of being part of a team at nationals won out.

Before very long the other local teams were negatively affected as most of the national swimmers left to join Illinois Masters. Illinois Masters competed as a regular team at all local meets, including the state championships, and soon no other team stood a chance against them. In CMSA meetings we continued to lobby for a statewide umbrella team that would allow the local teams to remain viable. When the main opponent moved out of Illinois we passed the umbrella team concept at the next CMSA meeting.

At that time we knew we needed to tread lightly and to restore some of the good feelings that had been damaged in the first Illinois Masters era. So the first issue was the name of the new umbrella team. It could not be called Illinois Masters because there were too many bad feelings associated with that name, so we finally settled on Lincoln Masters. We established rules

to protect the local teams at local meets. Whenever members of Lincoln Masters swam locally they swam for their local team or, if someone did not belong to a local team, they swam as “Independent.” “Unattached” meant you did not belong to any team, whether a subgroup of Lincoln Masters or another team. No one was permitted to enter a local meet as Lincoln Masters, unless the meet was a national championship. But when you swam outside of CMSA you swam as Lincoln Masters. Local teams could choose whether or not to become a part of Lincoln Masters. It took a while for some of the larger teams to join, but eventually most, but not all, did.

It worked beautifully. New local teams were formed each year and old ones regained members who left Illinois Masters to return to their local teams. A few people continued to swim for Illinois Masters but it was no longer the super team it had been.

After many years as Lincoln Masters, with people frequently asking us if we were from Nebraska, we started talking about changing the

name from Lincoln Masters to Illinois Masters. The hard feelings over the first Illinois Masters team had subsided and we wanted to be more clearly identified as being from Illinois. After a few more years of discussion, we made the name change to Illinois Masters.

When the name of our statewide governing organization changed from Central Masters Swimming Association (“Central” was inherited from the AAU) to Illinois Masters Swimming Association, there had to be a slight name change to distinguish Illinois Masters (the team) from ILSMA (the governing organization). Illinois Masters has never been the official team of CMSA/ILMSA, just one of the teams, albeit the largest. So the name was changed to Team Illinois Masters.

Although you may hear an occasional complaint that Team Illinois Masters is only for those who go to nationals, it actually works for swimmers who travel to another LMSC, e.g., Wisconsin or Indiana, even if not for nationals. And it works for those who never swim outside our association, because it allows the local teams

to remain strong and competitive.

Team Illinois Masters (under any of its names) has been very successful on the national level, winning national championships and setting many national and world relay records. One of the highlights for me was the 1994 World Championships in Montreal. Because of the opportunity to swim on relays, every Illinois Masters swimmer in attendance was able to take home a medal.

There is no denying that the umbrella team was created for those who like to go to nationals. If you swim in nationals or other out-of-association meets, you benefit by being a member of Team Illinois Masters, not only by being able to swim on relays but also by having the camaraderie of a team at the meet. If you never swim at nationals or other out-of-association meets, you still benefit because your local team is able to be as large and as strong as your members want it to be, with no fear of members deserting to go to the “national” team. Everyone wins.

## Illinois Swimmers Break National Relay Records

On Saturday May 3rd the fastest four freestyle swimmers over age 75 in Illinois assembled in the Evanston High School pool to go after the National Masters Swimming Records for the 800 and the 400-yard (SCY) freestyle relays. The records to beat for the 75+ age group were set by an Oregon Masters team in 1999 and 1998 at 12:04.39 and at 5:10.57 respectively.

When the gun went off for the 800-yard (4 x 200) relay, all four swimmers swam better than their best times of the season to smash the record by more than a minute, swimming it in 11:03.44. After a 30-minute rest they were back on the blocks for the 400-free relay, which they finished off in 4:57.61, breaking that record by nearly 13 seconds.

The Illinois team consisted of: Wayne Leengran 77 of Northbrook, swimming for Deerfield Coho Swim Club, a frequent National Top Ten swimmer and holder of multiple Illinois State freestyle records; Fred Lehman 77 of Norridge, swimming for Shabbona Sharks, and another Illinois State record holder; Steve Mullins 75 of Evanston, swimming for Evanston Masters, and who had just returned from Perth, Australia having earned five medals at the 2008 World Masters Championships; and Tom Banfield 75 of Oak Brook, swimming for Oak Brook Masters Stars, also a holder of multiple Illinois State records.

The team thanks Coach Heidi Toft and all the members of the Evanston Wildcatfish Masters Team for sponsoring this sanctioned meet and for their loud vocal support during the meet.

### ILMSA Committee Chairs

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