



California Surf Lifesaving Association

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Southwest Region - United States Lifesaving Association

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World Wide Web: www.cslsa.org

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By Robert A. Moore

It has been a year since I have seen you last. I have been on a cruise, had two shoulder surgeries, and retired.

Please excuse my stroll down memory lane, but I believe it does have something to do with who I am and my roll as Past President/Advisor.

Where has the time gone? I began my career in open water lifesaving in 1967. I signed a payroll deduction form for the National Surf Lifesaving Association, NSLSA, and the Los Angeles County Lifeguard Association, LACOLA. As a rookie, I had no idea what I was signing, but it was strongly suggested that I sign! I received a decal and that was the last that I heard about both organizations. The NSLSA had some competition events up and down the coast. What was that about? I became involved in my local association and was elected Secretary. As Secretary of LACOLA, I was involved in hosting a NSLSA meeting. WOW, lifeguards from Southern California, legends - Vince Morehouse, Max Bowman, Bob Burnside, Don Rohrer, Buddy Belche, Bob Shea, Bill Owen, Tim "I smell a Rat" Dorsey, and many more. They were administrators, chiefs, and officers. I was a mere recurrent.

LACOLA became, as many other associations did during the 1970's, a bargaining unit. It was a necessary move during that era, but not my expertise or passion. That is when I focused on the NSLSA. I became permanent during my involvement in the NSLSA and was one of a few non-administrator/officer folks around. As a Board of Director for a few years, I became involved in the competition side as well as the business side. Thanks to the support of some of the 'big guys', I was voted on the Executive Board as a delegate. I guess I was the token Los Angeles County person as well as the only non-administrator/officer on the Executive Board. There were some 'difficult' times during the 1960's - 70's. All of the hard work to create the organization was about to start over. In 1979 we voted to change the name to the United States Lifesaving Association, USLA, and created a region called the Western United States Lifesaving Association, WUSLA. I was selected USLA Coach in 1979 in preparation for a tour to South Africa in 1980. Due to issues beyond our control, the trip did not occur until 1981. I was selected USLA Coach again for the 1981 Australian Team competition. I was elected to the WUSLA Executive Board again in 1981 and the region was spanked hard at the Florida USLA meeting by the rest of the country. We had taken it for granted that we would continue to hold all of the USLA Executive Board positions with the exception of Joe Pecoraro from Chicago who was the USLA Advisor when Sheridan Byerly resigned the Past President position to allow Joe to serve on the Executive Board. Dick Miller was the only WUSLA representative to be elected and Byron Ware continued as the Executive Director. I was the USLA Competition Chairman and we spent three solid days trying to establish the

competition rules that are now the basis of what we do today. I hate politics! I still feel the headache. The regionalism and national mistrust was at its peak. I was selected the USLA Coach/Manager for the 1983 South African competition/exchange team and was a speaker at the International Training School involving World Lifesaving. 1983 was a turning point with my involvement in the organization(s). Due to circumstances of a resignation and encouragement from others, I ran for president of the WUSLA, this was something that I did not want to do. I was elected by the slimmest of margins. A mere permanent lifeguard heading up an Executive Board of administrators and officers. My first goal was to bring the region together and eliminate the infighting. This was accomplished by meeting monthly. My belief was that if we meet, there will be something to do and relationships would be enhanced. The egos of our membership were significant, but once the USLA issues came to the forefront, our region came together, for which I was most proud. I attended the World Lifesaving, WLS, meeting in Hawaii in 1983 and served on the competition committee. I was totally involved on the regional, national, and world level. All on my own time and money I might add. I attended many world meetings as a delegate and presented papers for publication and presentation. I served as President of the region, which is now known as the California Surf Lifesaving Association, CSLSA, for ten years and finally stepped down because I was tired. I hate politics! I speak direct and from the heart which sometimes causes friction. I had been the spokesman for the CSLSA at the national meetings and upset the rest of the country on more than one occasion. They thought everything I said was from me when in reality it was CSLSA Board actions. The rest of the country did not understand that we as a region met prior to the USLA meetings and decided what was to be addressed and positions established. Other regions did not practice our way of doing business. Most of them practiced the 'seat of the pants'/'make it up as you go along' type representation and because of that, did not trust us. They were making judgments based on their own perceptions. Did I mention I hate politics! During my presidency, I was promoted to lieutenant. I was now one of the 'other side', an officer. But I never forgot my roots, why we were there, or the backbone of the organization - the membership.

It has not been a smooth journey, but I would not change a thing (well maybe a couple of things). I have learned that no one can do it alone. It takes a team effort and support from your significant other. I have been fortunate to be surrounded by great individuals during my involvement in all four organizations (local, regional, national, and world). It has been an honor to serve with, for, the best professionals on the planet. Our membership's service to the public is second to none.

On 5:00 p.m. Thursday, March 31, 2005, I walked out the door of my office for the last time. I was proud of myself until I said goodbye to my assistant in the parking lot, then I lost it. Lifesaving has been my life. It has been my passion. I am told that retirement is the greatest. I am new at this, but feel that the journey is the fulfillment. But as we all learn, until you do it a while, you can't appreciate it.

So, I will continue to use my 'experience' to advise the CSLSA Executive Board to the best of my ability and for the betterment of lifesaving as I begin a new chapter in my life. I will also continue to speak from the heart because I hate politics! It has been an honor to serve and I enjoyed and look forward to your fellowship, Yours in Lifesaving.