

Date: February 24, 2018  
To: USS Board members  
From: Bruce Burton, President  
Subject: February 2018 President's Report

Dear USS Board members,

Thank you for traveling to Florida for our Board meeting and Sailing Leadership Forum. This is my report in the interim.

### **Sailing Leadership Forum**

Our Board gathered on St. Pete Beach, so all of us know what a complete success the event was. Once again our staff did a fabulous job organizing the facilities and planning our key note speakers. Brian Franzo, Ron Tite and Jack Gierhart all delivered great messages.

You can view the Forum's videos at <http://sailingleadership.org/video/>

Ron Tite's interview with Jake Fish summarized many points of his keynote, which I share with you:

- Disruption is at the heart of the fight for people's time. Ron learned this back when he spoke at SLF in San Diego and is at the heart of his keynote. New opportunities exist for people's time that may be more attractive than sailing.
- "Stick it to the man even if you are the man." Established organizations must embrace startup business enthusiasm for taking advantage of market opportunities and embrace productive change.
- The barrier to entry to skiing (snow sport on a mountain) was much higher than snowboarding (snow sport on a mountain), so Ron chose snowboarding. This manifested itself in a cultural difference and is analogous to yacht clubs and community sailing centers. Just like snowboarding grew very fast because of a low barrier to entry, growth in community sailing centers (sailing boats) has exceed grown in yacht clubs (sailing boats).
- Reinvention of an organization or oneself must be motivated because you want to do it vs. because someone told you to do it. This is something that we should be well aware of when we choose leaders for committees-they need to be enthusiastic about what needs to be done, "not just checking the box" as Ron says.

Awards: The most fulfilling time as a leader is when we reward our members for their superior work on behalf of our sport. "Gratitude is our currency" and this is the time that we pass out the checks. Our awards night was changed from a banquet to a cocktail party followed by the ceremony. This format change reduced the total amount of time and expense and I was very pleased with the change. When standing on a stage for two hours every minute counts! Congratulations to all of the winners with their heartfelt acceptance speeches.

Past President's Luncheon: Janet Baxter, Bob Hobbs, Jim Muldoon and I had lunch at St. Petersburg YC on Thursday of the Forum. It is a great opportunity for me to connect with past leaders and learn from them. They had good advice, sharing what they learned and how things have changed since their leadership.

### **Friends in Florida**

Bob Johnstone and I connected again, this time in Vero Beach, Florida when he hosted a party on his 50ft MJM "Zing" followed by a barbeque hosted by Jane and me in our home. We had many friends of US Sailing there and I bring this to your attention as I did last month because I strongly believe that Bob has very unique and superior industry knowledge along with an indefatigable enthusiasm for innovation and growth. He has good advice for me.



Unfortunately, for the record, he seems to shop at the same clothing stores as Commodore David Elwell (NYYC).

### **Olympic Sailing Committee (OSC)**

The priorities and efforts articulated in my last report are the same-revenue generation and expense reduction. The OSC leadership on the Revenue side is meeting via phone on average every other day to urgently increase revenue. Brian Keane (Chairman of the ORB) and Steve Freitas (USS Treasurer) have been invaluable as volunteer leaders during this effort. These are the revenue generation method that are being pursued, boldface are focus items:

- 1 Social Media
- 2 One Design Class Appeals**
- 3 Key Yacht Club Events
- 4 Commercial Sponsorships**
- 5 USOC Aarhus Grant**
- 6 Medalist Appeal**
- 7 Coaching Campaign (led by Malin Burnham)**
- 8 Round Tables TOP

Reviews: As reported previously, the OSC has commissioned three reviews of the program using the format used for the Mid-Quad review of 2014. The three areas of focus are:

1. Subjective Review-interview athletes and coaches to ascertain if they feel the program is on track and learn what we can improve. This review has been completed and submitted to the OSC.
2. Objective Review-audit the High Performance Plan and determine how we are performing against the plan. This includes a financial and business analysis. Review is in process.
3. Building the Talent Base-evaluate the system that promotes high performance youth sailing and make recommendations for improvement. This review has been completed and submitted to the OSC.

When the Objective Review is complete we will consolidate all three reviews into a final report and submit it to the Board for your review and comment.

### Over the Bow

Our list of important subjects remains the same as last month:

1. Chief Marketing Officer hire-Jack will lead this. This will take a few months.
2. Finishing the Olympic Budget and supporting Malcolm Page in his role.
3. Hosting the Rolex Awards Feb 28<sup>th</sup>. Com. Peter Duncan and Erika Reineke are the winners!
4. Support revenue generation planning and execution for the Olympic Program.
5. Plan West Coast tour with Cory Sertl and Jack Gierhart (later in the year).
6. Work on Committee chair transitions.

Thank you for your continued support,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Bruce J. Burton', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Bruce J. Burton,  
President