

Date: November 15, 2017
To: USS Board members
From: Bruce Burton, President
Subject: November 2017 President's Report



Dear USS Board members,

**Over the transom
Board Meeting at Bristol, RI**

We held our annual Face to Face Board meeting at Roger Williams University in celebration of our new offices on the campus. It was an honor to have Past President Jim Muldoon join us for our meetings. Thank you Jim for donating our new conference room-it is the first room that one sees when entering the office! Well done.

My opening remarks included thanks for the hard work and fortitude that the Board demonstrated in the many initiatives that we have undertaken the past few years, culminating in the new offices in Bristol. I am sure that you were impressed with the vastly improved workspace for our employees. The quality, comfort and throughput of our employees will increase because of this. Well done to all of you.

Some comments for the record for our membership to note:

1. CEO Gierhart reported that college admissions are declining and the over 200 small colleges may close. D3 Olympic programs may be the future. There is a decline in all sports in general. Please see his report for more detail on the many initiatives of the year.
2. Bylaws: our bylaws need review and updating on many fronts, especially for governance and safety of competitors. We will work hard on this in 2018.
3. Youth: (John Pearce) we must continually emphasize multiple sport play for youth, not specializing in any sport, as specialization leads to burn out and eventual loss of interest in the sport. Most youth sports are not played as adults and sailing is. So we do long-term harm to ourselves when we push sailing too much on youth. We must push for skills development and the best experience possible (fun!). We need to simplify USS youth regattas.
4. Adult: (Betsy Alison) adult keelboat programs are up 10%-go Betsy! Hurricanes have impacted the schools. Other facts:
 - a. Hurricanes have significantly impacted schools.
 - b. Safety at Sea is up 25% for online learning. Should we have SaS for juniors?
 - c. USS has 150 first sail locations. We need to connect the USS logo to first sail locations.
5. Offshore: (Nathan Titcomb) we have a 100% reduction in paperwork-no paper! 80 measurers were trained in 2017.
6. Race Administration: (Matt Hill) we need to encourage racers to start giving back by becoming race officials before they retire completely from racing. We also need to revise our bylaws to include background checks on race administrators-felons not allowed.
7. Education: (Stu Gilfillen) we are including SafeSport requirements for all instructors. USS is the leader in STEM education through our REACH program. We have had over 600,000 students attend our REACH program sessions.
8. Member services: (Katie Ouellette) we are working on our value proposition with our marketing department. Other facts:



- a. Phones and communication:
 - i. 4 people answer phones.
 - ii. We have had 280 live chats while online in the last 90 days.
 - iii. 97 after hours messages.
 - b. We are working very hard on the Sailing Leadership Forum to make up for time taken away by the move.
9. Information Technology: (Mike Waters) we are making great progress in IT. Our annual software cost went from \$17,000 to \$1,500 because of Office 365. Go Mike! We are focusing on tools that are useful for everyone and are flexible. Reduced tool count would be good, if possible. He is working with Columbia University on the feasibility of developing new analytical tools/products for all racing sailors.
10. USS Foundation: (Georgia McDonald) we have raised over \$1M for the Association and \$1M for Olympics to date. "Our focus is on the horizon" is our marketing message. We are now using Black Baud "Raiser's Edge" software, which is the best in the business.
11. Finance: (Donna Kane) some facts:
- a. We have 7% administration expense, which is low for a nonprofit.
 - b. We have 41% salary and benefits, which is low for a nonprofit (we have large expenses in the Olympic program that make this number relatively low).
 - c. We paid \$380K for the office furniture and have a \$265K loan.
12. Olympics: (Malcolm Page) we have made great progress on many fronts:
- a. Almost 100% of coaching is paid by the USST. We want to do this because we can ensure the quality of the coaches and their curriculum, which will align with Malcolm's objectives.
 - b. We are rekindling the "winning spirit" that the team used to have.
 - c. Veterans are returning (Railey and Paine) and the campaigns are building momentum.
 - d. Preparations are in full swing for the training trip to Colorado Springs.

Strategic Planning

We have spent considerable time and money on strategic planning and these are a few of the highlights that I noted:

1. We will increase accessibility wherever possible.
2. We will engage sailors who have left.
3. We will promote our brand and improve our messaging.
4. We will connect with our RSAs. We have intentionally been focusing on improving our internal operations and now it is time to turn outwardly and focus on our customers.
5. We will utilize our member volunteers as the keys to our success.
6. We should consider staff position dedicated to supporting RSAs.

We noted that Clark Chapin has worked diligently on our bylaws and as mentioned above, he has more work to do! Thank you Clark!

Please review the staff reports for the detailed information on the meeting.

National Sailing Hall of Fame

Please see the BAR I have submitted, that will be discussed in Executive Session. We are making progress on aligning our efforts with this very fine organization. The NSHOF has a Board call Dec 4th with a FTF meeting in Annapolis on Dec 12th.

Board dinner at RWU Boathouse

After our meeting we had a wonderful dinner, catered at the RWU boathouse. The highlight of the evening was when Paul Cayard and Gary Jobson held court and reminisced about America's Cups and formal rivalries. I wish it had been recorded for posterity.

USS Foundation

The Foundation met on the 20th and I was very impressed with the leadership of Dave Rosekrans and his Board. Foundation Board member David Loring will coach our staff in foundation best practices; David is a nonprofit professional with Black Baud.

David Loring recommends a daily athlete message to support our fundraising efforts. The USSF is not thought of a place to donate and we can use our athletes to change that perception. We need to do things that provide immediate impact.

We need to close the distance between the donation and the experience, e.g. the donors must have close exposure to the athletes, race, or event.

Four areas of fundraising, in random order:

1. Access to sailing.
2. Training and education.
3. Competitive excellence.
4. Where most needed.

The average gift officer produces \$1M annually in revenue for the organization.

Small donations give credibility with large donors (and I imagine vice versa!).

Georgia wants to focus on planned giving when there is time to do so.

Olympic Sailing Committee (OSC)

The OSC has been very active with our bi-weekly meetings, highlights of our activities are described below:

1. The entire OSC met face to face in Colorado Spring this week. The purpose of the meeting was to learn from the USOC the best practices of the best leaders in Olympic sports. We met for 1-1/2 days at the USOC headquarters. The USOC is our single largest funding source and we must improve to retain our funding.
2. We have a \$300K yearend cash flow deficit and we are in "all hands on deck" mode to reduce this deficit. Note-we have the pledges to support our budget but not the cash. We ask for any Board member help in securing donations or value in kind.
3. The USST athletes and OSC members had dinner Monday night and strengthened team bonds. OSC is committed to do everything possible to help the team.
4. The combined World in Aarhus Denmark is a major qualification for the country to the Olympics. We will use that for a fundraising push.
5. Sailing World Cup continues to run a deficit and we are seeking requirements relief and sponsorship to close the gap. We are evaluating the cost/benefit of this event.

Over the Bow

The major items in the next month will be:

1. NSHOF proposal for cooperative efforts.
2. USS Christmas party and meetings in Bristol.
3. Closing funding gaps and the annual appeal.

Thank you for your continued support,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Bruce J. Burton', with a stylized, cursive script.

Bruce J. Burton,
President